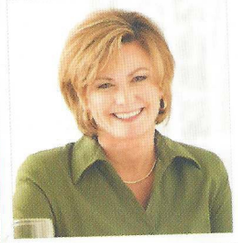
76 yummy holiday sweets!
taste of home HOLIDAY
CHRISTMAS cookies & CANDIES
ALL ON PULL-OUT CARDS!
cute & easy!
FESTIVE TREATS for gift giving & cookie exchanges
taste of home HOLIDAY
NOVEMBER 2009
TASTEOFHOME.COM



Welcome to TASTE OF HOME HOLIDAY!

Santa is sure to be extra generous at your house this year when he samples the scrumptious cookies and candies you've left for him! Sincere compliments will come from family and friends after your tempting array of treats puts everyone in a festive frame of mind.

If you enjoy preparing and sharing sweets for the holidays and all-year round, you're going to love the 76 delicious recipes in this timeless treasury—each one with a color photo and printed on a sturdy pull-out recipe card. These merry morsels also make thrifty and heart-felt gifts.

Every recipe here is a time-tested family favorite of another home cook, just like you. You won't need to rely on Christmas magic to see the satisfied smiles of your loved ones as they savor every last bite.

We at Taste of Home wish you and your family a happy, memorable and delicious holiday season!

Enjoy!

Catherine Cassidy

CATHERINE CASSIDY
Editor in Chief

in this issue...

PINEAPPLE DELIGHTS

PEPPERMINT MELTAWAYS

ORANGE GUMDROPS

Consumer Information: Reiman Publications may share information about you with reputable companies in order for them to offer you products and services of interest to you. If you would rather we not share information, please write to Reiman Publications Customer Service Mailing List, P.O. Box 5294, Harlan IA 51593-0794.

TASTE OF HOME HOLIDAY (ISSN-) (USPS 025-114), Vol. 2, No. 1, November 2009 © Reiman Media Group, Inc., 2009. Published five times per year; April, May, August, October and November by Reiman Media Group Inc., 5400 S. 60th St., Greendale WI 53129-1404. Periodicals Postage Paid at Greendale, WI and at additional mailing offices.

Subscription prices in U.S.: $19.98 for 1 yr., $29.98 for 2 yrs., $39.98 for 3 yrs. (Canada: 1 yr., $23.98 CDN plus 5% GST or 13% HST, where applicable, U.S. funds prepaid.) Send new subscriptions to P.O. Box 5294, Harlan IA 51593-0794. Canada: P.O. Box 2060 STN Main, Niagara Falls ON L2E 7M2. Allow 4-6 weeks. Taste of Home is a registered trademark of Reiman Media Group, Inc. Material in this publication may not be reproduced in any form without permission. Printed in USA.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Taste of Home Holiday, P.O. Box 5294, Harlan IA 51593-0794. Send undeliverable Canadian addresses to: Canada_UPM_Harlan@cpmx.ca.

Questions About Your Subscription? Write to Taste of Home Holiday Customer Service, P.O. Box 5294, Harlan IA 51593-0794; Canada: P.O. Box 905 STN Main, Niagara Falls ON L2E 7L1; call **1-800/344-6913**; or E-mail **rpsubscustomercare@custhelp.com**. For address changes, include both old and new addresses. If the post office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligations unless we receive a corrected address within 1 year.

Pictured on front cover: Penguin Cutouts (p. 19), Chocolate Mint Dreams (p. 11), Lemon Stars (p. 35), Best-Ever Sugar Cookies (shown as a Christmas tree) (p. 9), Peanut Butter Snowballs (p. 67) and Two-Tone Christmas Cookies (p. 55).

contents

cookies 3 | candies 57 | index 80

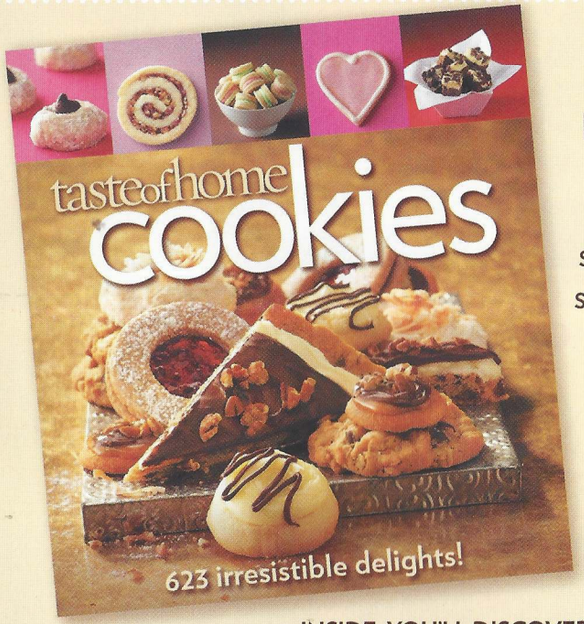
SUBMIT YOUR RECIPES!

Want to share your favorite recipes with Taste of Home?
You and your recipe could be featured in a future issue!

GO TO:
TasteofHome.com/submit

delicious by the dozens!

satisfy your cookie cravings with 623 scrumptious sweets



From chip-filled drop cookies and gooey, jam-packed sandwiches to buttery shortbreads and fudgy bars, ***Taste of Home Cookies*** offers delightful treats for every occasion!

INSIDE, YOU'LL DISCOVER–

- **Over 600 unbeatable cookie, bar and brownie recipes ideal for holiday cookie platters, potluck contributions, bake sales, classroom treats and more!**
- **12 photo-packed chapters including Christmas Classics, Shortcut Creations, Big Batch Bonanza and Timeless Slice & Bake.**
- **Easy-to-follow, step-by-step directions that call for common ingredients you likely already have on hand.**

Whether you're looking for elegant additions to dessert buffets or quick-fix treats to fill your cookie jar, let ***Cookies*** inspire you to bake up a batch!

AVAILABLE WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD!

chocolate macadamia macaroons

Darlene Brenden
Salem, Oregon

I love coconut, chocolate and macadamia nuts, so in my effort to come up with the taste of my favorite candy bar, Almond Joy, I created this recipe. To make them more like a candy bar, I dipped the bottoms into chocolate. This has become my family's signature Christmas cookie.

taste of home

lime spritz cookies

Lori Daniels
Beverly, West Virginia

The refreshing citrus flavor in these pressed cookies comes from lime gelatin. They're easy, festive and delightfully different—always a big hit at potlucks and luncheons.

taste of home

chocolate macadamia macaroons

YIELD: 1-1/2 DOZEN.

- 2 cups flaked coconut
- 1/2 cup finely chopped macadamia nuts
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons baking cocoa
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- Pinch salt
- 2 egg whites, beaten
- 1 tablespoon light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 squares (1 ounce *each*) semisweet chocolate

1. In a large bowl, combine the coconut, macadamia nuts, sugar, cocoa, flour and salt. Add the egg whites, corn syrup and vanilla and mix well.
2. Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls onto greased baking sheets. Bake at 325° for 15-20 minutes or until set and dry to the touch. Cool for 5 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.
3. In a microwave, melt chocolate; stir until smooth. Dip the bottom of each cookie in chocolate; allow excess to drip off. Place on waxed paper; let stand until set.

Tip

If flaked coconut has been frozen or becomes dried out, you can make it fresh again by placing the amount you need in a bowl and sprinkling with a few drops of water. Cover and microwave until warm.
SANDRA S., GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

lime spritz cookies

YIELD: 14 DOZEN.

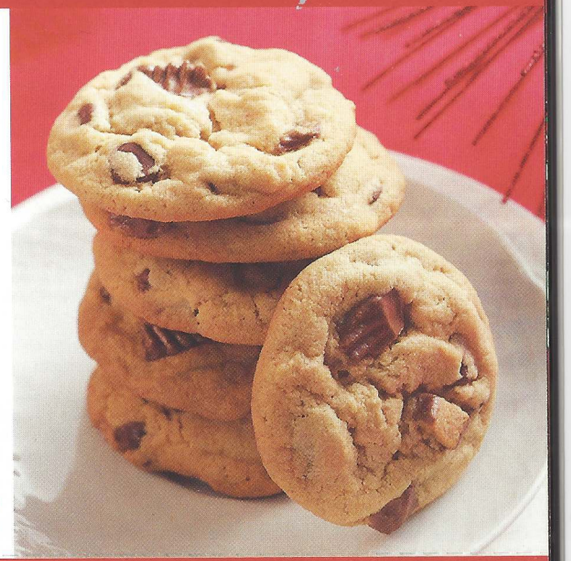
- 1-1/2 cups butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 package (3 ounces) lime gelatin
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- Red and green colored sugar, optional

1. In a large bowl, cream the butter, sugar and gelatin. Beat in egg and vanilla. Combine flour and baking powder; gradually add to the creamed mixture.
2. Using a cookie press fitted with the disk of your choice, press dough into desired shapes 2 in. apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Sprinkle with colored sugar if desired.
3. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until set. Remove to wire racks to cool.

peanut butter cup cookies

Faith Jensen
Meridian, Idaho

With the classic combination of chocolate and peanut butter, it's no surprise these are my family's favorite cookies. Because they're so easy to make, I'm able to whip up a batch at a moment's notice.



tasteofhome

white chocolate raspberry thumbprints

Agnes Ward
Stratford, Ontario

When I pass around the cookie tray, all eyes land on these fancy thumbprints. The white chocolate filling and dab of jewel-toned jam will satisfy the most discriminating sweet tooth.

tasteofhome

peanut butter cup cookies

YIELD: 7-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2/3 cup peanut butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 2 cups chopped peanut butter cups (about six 1.6-ounce packages)

1 In a large bowl, cream the butter, peanut butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in chocolate chips and peanut butter cups.

2 Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool for 2 minutes before removing to wire racks.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reduced-fat or generic brands of peanut butter are not recommended for this recipe.

Tip

Light or dark brown sugar can be used interchangeably in recipes—it's a matter of personal taste. Light brown sugar has less molasses flavor and is more delicate. Dark brown sugar tastes more "old-fashioned" and has a stronger molasses flavor. TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

white chocolate raspberry thumbprints

YIELD: ABOUT 3 DOZEN.

- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs, *separated*
- 1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup baking cocoa
- 1-1/4 cups finely chopped pecans *or* walnuts

FILLING:

- 4 squares (1 ounce *each*) white baking chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup seedless raspberry jam

1 In a small bowl, cream butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolks. Combine flour and cocoa; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 1-2 hours or until easy to handle.

2 In a shallow bowl, whisk egg whites until foamy. Place nuts in another shallow bowl. Shape dough into 1-in. balls. Dip in egg whites, then roll in nuts.

3 Using a wooden spoon handle, make an indentation in center of each cookie. Place 1 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes. Remove to wire racks to cool.

4 In a microwave, melt white chocolate and butter at 70% power for 1 minute; stir. Microwave at additional 10- to 20-second intervals, stirring until smooth. Spoon about 1/2 teaspoon into each cookie. Top each with about 1/4 teaspoon jam. Store in an airtight container.

star sandwich cookies

Patti Schmidt
Canton, Ohio

I baked these treats for a church tea. The night before, I gave a sample to the folks setting up. They like the cookies so much, they set aside a few to ensure they'd get some the next day!

tasteofhome

hint o' mint cookies

Janet Hartmann
Gibbon, Minnesota

After I experimented in the kitchen mixing and matching ingredients to come up with a new and different cookie recipe, my husband proclaimed these the winner! With a little peppermint extract, these cake-like cookies bring a nice close to any meal.

tasteofhome

star sandwich cookies

YIELD: ABOUT 5 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup heavy whipping cream
- Sugar

FILLING:

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4 to 8 teaspoons heavy whipping cream
- Liquid or paste food coloring, optional

1. In a large bowl, beat the butter, flour and cream. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or until easy to handle.
2. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/8-in. thickness. Cut with a floured 2 in. star cookie cutter. Sprinkle tops of cookies with sugar; place on ungreased baking sheets.
3. Prick each cookie 3-4 times with a fork. Bake at 375° for 7-9 minutes or until set. Remove to wire racks to cool.
4. For the filling, combine the butter, confectioners' sugar, vanilla and enough cream to achieve desired spreading consistency. Tint with food coloring if desired. Carefully spread filling on the bottom of half of the cookies; top with remaining cookies.

hint o' mint cookies

YIELD: 4 DOZEN.

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1/2 cup buttermilk

FROSTING:

- 3 tablespoons butter, softened
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/3 cup baking cocoa
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 to 4 tablespoons milk

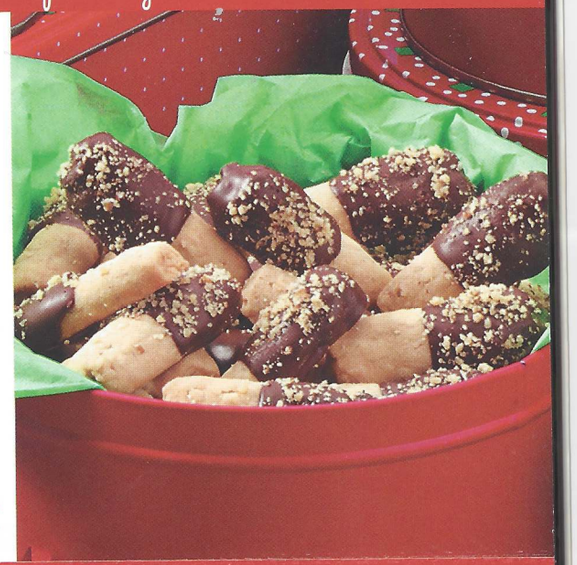
1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and extracts. Combine the flour, baking soda and cream of tartar; add to the creamed mixture alternately with buttermilk, beating well after each addition. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or until easy to handle.
2. Drop by heaping teaspoonfuls 2 in. apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Flatten with a glass dipped in sugar. Bake at 350° for 6 to 8 minutes or until set. Remove to wire racks to cool.
3. In a small bowl, beat the butter, sugar, cocoa, salt, vanilla and enough milk to achieve spreading consistency. Frost cookies.

chocolate-dipped maple logs

Lorraine Caland
Thunder Bay, Ontario

For as long as I can remember, these fancy little maple logs have been a Christmas tradition at our house. My girls loved working the assembly line and dipping the ends in chocolate.

tasteofhome



best-ever sugar cookies

Christy Hinrichs
Parkville, Missouri

Nutmeg adds subtle goodness to these crisp, delicious cookies. Their glossy icing makes them look extra special.

tasteofhome

chocolate-dipped maple logs

YIELD: ABOUT 6 DOZEN.

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon maple flavoring
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup quick-cooking oats
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 3/4 cup ground walnuts

1. In a large bowl, cream the butter, shortening and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in vanilla and maple flavoring. Combine the flour, oats and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well.
2. On a lightly floured surface, shape dough into 1/2-in.-wide logs. Cut into 2-in. pieces. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 325° for 15-18 minutes or until set and very lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool.
3. In a microwave, melt chocolate chips and milk; stir until smooth. Dip one end of each cookie into chocolate; allow excess to drip off. Roll in walnuts. Place on waxed paper until set.

best-ever sugar cookies

YIELD: 4 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 package (3 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon almond extract
- 2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

FROSTING:

- 3-3/4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/3 cup water
- 4 teaspoons meringue powder

Assorted colors of liquid food coloring

1. In a large bowl, cream the butter, cream cheese and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolk and extracts. Combine the flour, salt, baking soda and nutmeg; gradually add to creamed mixture. Cover and refrigerate for 3 hours or until easy to handle.
2. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/8-in. thickness. Cut with floured 2-1/2-in. cookie cutters.
3. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Cool for 2 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.
4. For the frosting, in a small bowl, combine the confectioners' sugar, water and meringue powder; beat on low speed just until combined. Beat on high for 4 minutes or until soft peaks form. Cover frosting with damp paper towels or plastic wrap between uses.
5. Tint a small amount of frosting with colors of your choice; leave remaining frosting plain. Working quickly, spread or pipe plain frosting over cookies; let dry at room temperature for several hours or until firm. With small new paintbrushes and food coloring, brush a thin layer of food coloring over frosting. Let stand until set. Add designs with reserved tinted frosting. Let stand until set. Store in an airtight container.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Meringue powder is available from Wilton Industries. Call 1-800/794-5866 or visit www.wilton.com.

butter cookie snowmen

Kathleen Taugher
East Troy, Wisconsin

It is great fun making these tasty and adorable cookies with my grandchildren. The dough is easy to shape.

chocolate mint dreams

Anne Revers
Omaha, Nebraska

Since chocolate-mint is my favorite flavor combination, I sometimes eat these dainty shortbread-like treats by the dozen. But I manage to put some aside for guests because they make my cookie trays look so elegant.

butter cookie snowmen

YIELD: 2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- Red and yellow paste food coloring
- Miniature chocolate chips

1 In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add milk and vanilla. Gradually add flour and mix well. Remove 1/3 cup of dough to a small bowl; tint with red food coloring. Repeat with 1/3 cup of dough and yellow food coloring; set aside.

2 For snowmen, shape white dough into 24 balls, 1-1/4 in. each; 24 balls, about 1/2 in. each; and 24 balls, about 1/8 in. each. For bodies, place large balls on two ungreased baking sheets; flatten to 3/8-in. thickness. Place 1/2-in. balls above bodies for heads; flatten.

3 Shape red dough into 24 balls, 1/8 in. each, and 24 triangles. Place triangles above heads for hats; attach 1/8-in. white balls for tassels. Place red balls on heads for noses. Divide the yellow dough into 24 pieces; shape into scarves and position on snowmen. Add chocolate chip eyes and buttons.

4 Bake at 325° for 13-16 minutes or until set. Cool for 2 minutes before carefully removing to wire racks.

chocolate mint dreams

YIELD: 4 DOZEN.

- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 squares (1 ounce each) unsweetened chocolate, melted and cooled
- 1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips

ICING:

- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1 to 2 drops green food coloring
- 1 to 2 tablespoons milk

DRIZZLE:

- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 teaspoon shortening

1 In a large bowl, cream butter and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in chocolate and extract. Gradually add flour and mix well. Stir in chocolate chips. (Dough will be soft.)

2 Drop by tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 6-8 minutes or until firm. Cool for 2 minutes before removing to wire racks to cool completely.

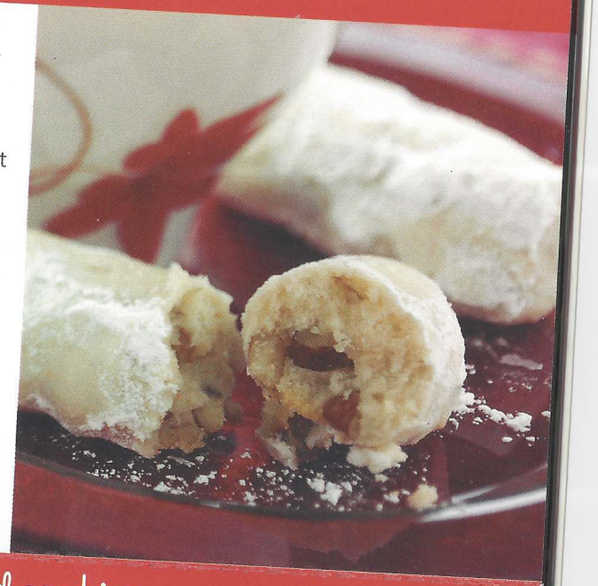
3 Meanwhile, combine the butter, confectioners' sugar, extract, food coloring and enough milk to achieve desired consistency; spread over cooled cookies. Let set. In a microwave, melt chocolate chips and shortening; stir until smooth. Drizzle over cookies.

pecan logs

Joyce Beck
Gadsden, Alabama

Folks always expect to find these tender, nutty logs on the cookie gift trays I give at Christmas. They're not overly sweet and go great with a steaming cup of coffee or tea.

taste of home

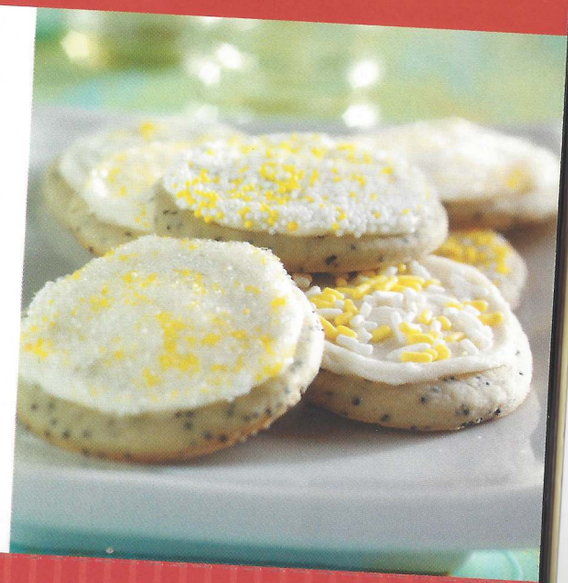


frosted poppy seed cookies

Mary Jackson
Germantown, Wisconsin

Poppy seeds add an unexpected touch—and a fun crunch—to these golden frosted cookies.

taste of home



pecan logs

YIELD: ABOUT 2-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 5 tablespoons confectioners' sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup finely chopped pecans
- Confectioners' sugar

1. In a small bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in vanilla. Add the flour, beating on low speed just until combined. Stir in pecans. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes or until easy to handle.
2. Shape 1/2 cupfuls into 1/2-in.-thick logs. Cut logs into 2-in. pieces. Place 2 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 15-18 minutes or until lightly browned. Roll warm cookies in confectioners' sugar; cool on wire racks.

Tip

An easy way to chop nuts is to put them in a plastic bag and roll them with a rolling pin to the desired fineness. It's quick, plus I save even more time since there's no chopper to clean. LINDA T., CRIVITZ, WISCONSIN

frosted poppy seed cookies

YIELD: ABOUT 5-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon *each* baking soda and salt
- 1 cup (8 ounces) sour cream
- 1/4 cup poppy seeds

FROSTING:

- 3 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 to 3 tablespoons milk
- Colored sprinkles and colored sugar, optional

1. In a large bowl, cream butter, shortening and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Combine flour, baking soda and salt; add to creamed mixture alternately with sour cream. Stir in poppy seeds. Cover and refrigerate for 8 hours or until easy to handle.
2. On a heavily floured surface, roll out dough to 1/8-in. thickness. Cut with floured 2-1/2-in. cookie cutters. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets.
3. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes or until set and edges are lightly browned. Cool for 2 minutes before removing to wire racks to cool completely.
4. For frosting, in a small bowl, beat the butter, confectioners' sugar, vanilla and enough milk to achieve the desired consistency. Lightly frost centers of cookies; sprinkle with colored sprinkles or colored sugar if desired.

pineapple delights

Jack Stubblefield
East Canton, Ohio

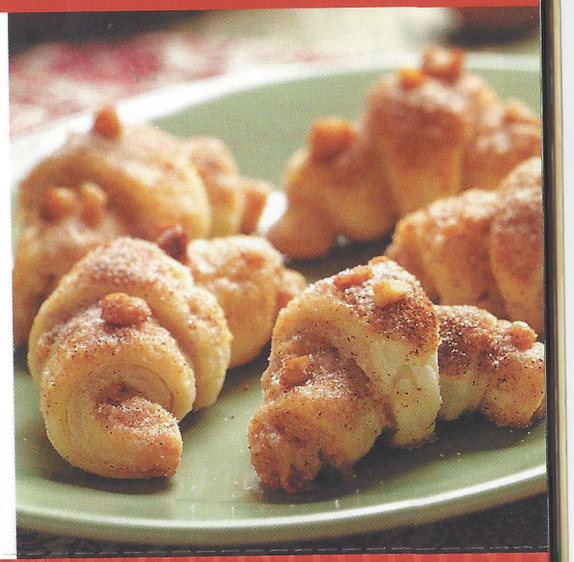
When I was stationed in Germany, my mother would often send these tropical-tasting cookies to me. The recipe is special because it came from my grandmother. Now my wife and daughter are carrying on the tradition of making these treats.

taste of home

vanilla walnut crescents

Betty Lawton
Pennington, New Jersey

Friends look forward to receiving a gift of these crescents. They're my all-time favorite cookies. The pastry is tender and flaky, and the vanilla flavor comes through beautifully.



taste of home

pineapple delights

YIELD: 7 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 can (8 ounces) unsweetened crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/4 cup chopped maraschino cherries

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in the pineapple, walnuts and cherries.
2. Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 425° for 7-9 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool.

Tip **Before chopping nuts in a food processor, dust them with flour. This keeps the nuts from sticking to the blades.** GLADYS W., CALVERT CITY, KENTUCKY

vanilla walnut crescents

YIELD: 3 DOZEN.

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup cold butter
- 1 egg, *separated*
- 2/3 cup sour cream
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2/3 cup finely chopped walnuts
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1. In a large bowl, combine flour and salt; cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. In a small bowl, whisk the egg yolk, sour cream and vanilla; add to crumb mixture and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight.
2. Divide dough into thirds. On a lightly floured surface, roll each portion into a 10-in. circle. Combine the walnuts, sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle 1/4 cup over each circle. Cut each circle into 12 wedges.
3. Roll up each wedge from the wide end and place point side down 1 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Curve ends to form crescents. Whisk egg white until foamy; brush over crescents. Sprinkle with remaining nut mixture.
4. Bake at 350° for 18-20 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool. Store in an airtight container.

be-mine sandwich cookies

Darcie Cross
Novi, Michigan

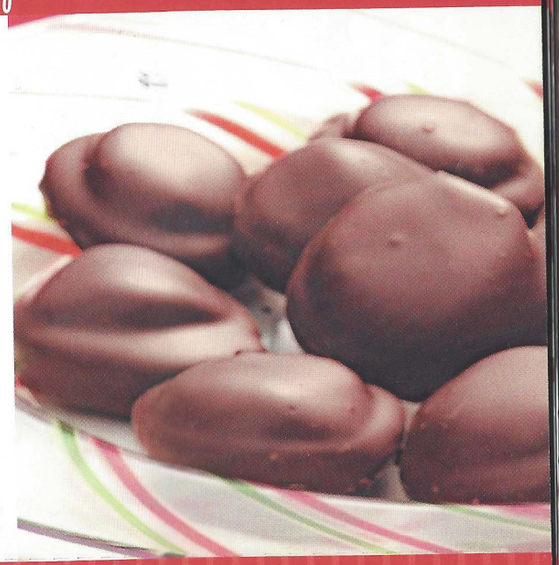
These simple cookies are the first thing to disappear from dessert tables. They're cute, colorful and extremely fast to make.

taste of home

chocolate mint surprises

Sheila Kerr
Revelstoke, British Columbia

I came up with this recipe a few years ago and have shared it with many people. I would often snack on these treats after my baby's middle-of-the-night feeding.



taste of home

be-mine sandwich cookies

YIELD: 50-55 COOKIES.

- 6 ounces white *or* milk chocolate candy coating, coarsely chopped
- 50 to 55 chocolate cream-filled sandwich cookies
- Assorted candy sprinkles *or* decorations

1. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt 2 oz. of candy coating at a time, stirring until smooth. Spread over cookie tops; decorate immediately. Place on waxed paper until set.

Tip

Candy coating—sometimes called almond bark or dipping or confectionery coating—is available in white, milk and dark chocolate varieties. It's available in many different forms. At your store, you may find large individual blocks, packages of flat disks or chips and boxes of individually wrapped 1-ounce squares. A substitute for 6 ounces of chocolate coating would be 6 ounces of chocolate chips and 1 tablespoon of shortening melted together.
TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

chocolate mint surprises

YIELD: ABOUT 6 DOZEN.

- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 squares (1 ounce *each*) unsweetened chocolate, melted and cooled
- 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

MINT FILLING:

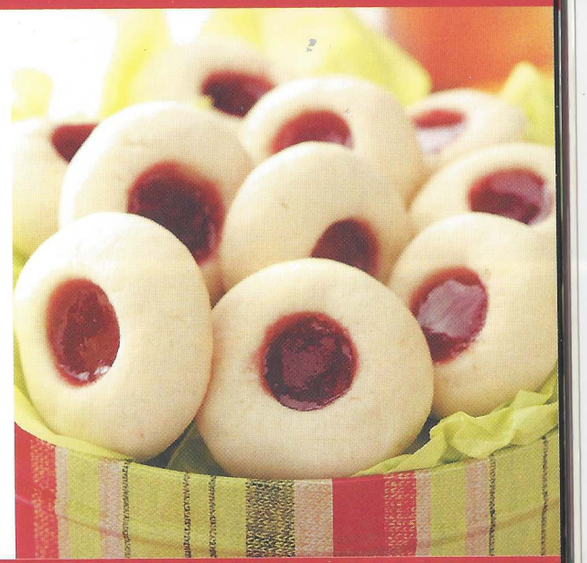
- 4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 3 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1/4 cup evaporated milk
- 2 to 3 teaspoons peppermint extract
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 pounds dark chocolate candy coating, melted

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Add melted chocolate. Combine the flour, baking powder and salt; gradually add to chocolate mixture and mix well. Shape in two 10-in. rolls; wrap each in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 4 hours or until firm.
2. Unwrap dough and cut into 1/4-in. slices. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 5-7 minutes or until edges are firm. Remove to wire racks to cool.
3. For filling, in a small bowl, combine the confectioners' sugar, butter, milk and extracts until smooth. Shape into 1/2-in. balls. Place a ball in the center of each cookie; flatten. Freeze for 30 minutes.
4. Dip cookies in melted candy coating to completely cover; allow excess to drip off. Place on waxed paper; let stand until set.

strawberry cream cookies

Glenna Aberle
Sabetha, Kansas

This cream cheese cookie with a yummy strawberry jam center looks lovely on a platter of holiday goodies. Even though they seem special, they're not tricky to make.

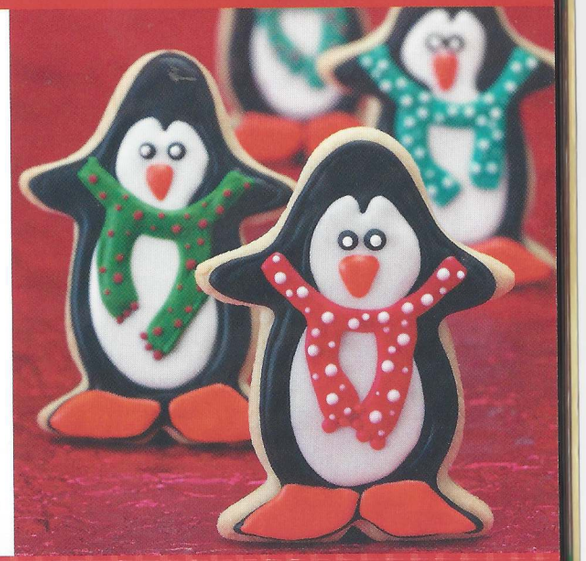


taste of home

penguin cutouts

Taste of Home Test Kitchen

For a cute Christmas cookie that you can have your children help decorate, give this recipe a try. It's a great way to inspire youngsters to get involved in the kitchen.



taste of home

strawberry cream cookies

YIELD: 5 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 package (3 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- 3 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- Seedless strawberry jam

1 In a large bowl, cream the butter, cream cheese and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolk and vanilla. Add flour and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or until easy to handle.

2 Shape dough into 1-in. balls. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Using the end of a wooden spoon handle, make a 1/2-in.-deep indentation in the center of each ball; fill with about 1/4 teaspoon jam. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until set. Remove to wire racks to cool.

Tip

To separate eggs easily, get an egg separator. Place the egg separator over a custard cup; crack the egg into the separator. As each egg is separated, place the yolk in another bowl. It's easier to separate eggs when they are cold.
TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

penguin cutouts

YIELD: 3 DOZEN.

- 1/2 cup butter-flavored shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 2-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon *each* baking soda and salt

FROSTING:

- 3-3/4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/3 cup water
- 4 teaspoons meringue powder
- Red *and/or* green, orange and black paste food coloring

1 In a large bowl, cream shortening and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Stir in sour cream. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Divide dough into three balls; cover and refrigerate for 3 hours or until easy to handle.

2 Remove one portion of the dough from the refrigerator at a time. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/8-in. thickness. Cut with a floured 4-in. penguin cookie cutter. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets.

3 Bake at 375° for 6-8 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool.

4 For frosting, in a small bowl, combine confectioners' sugar, water and meringue powder; beat on low speed just until combined. Beat on high for 4 minutes or until soft peaks form. Cover frosting with damp paper towels or plastic wrap between uses.

5 Set aside half of frosting. Tint half of the remaining frosting black. Divide remaining frosting in half; tint one orange and the other red and/or green.

6 Working quickly with the black frosting, pipe outside then inside outlines of the penguins' bodies; fill in with thinned black frosting. Let dry at room temperature for several hours or until firm. Fill in centers of penguins with thinned white frosting; let dry until firm.

7 Add eyes with the black and white frostings, orange noses and feet and red and/or green scarves. Let stand until set. Add white polka dots on the scarves. Let stand until set. Store in an airtight container.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Meringue powder is available from Wilton Industries. Call 1-800/794-5866 or visit www.wilton.com. The penguin cookie cutter is from Copper Gifts. Call 1-620/421-0654 or visit www.coppergifts.com.

cathedral window cookies

Diane Sequist
Meriden, Connecticut

This treat is bound to become a family favorite at your house. These eye-catching cookies are great for bake sales and holidays. Kids of all ages love the colorful mini marshmallows, chocolate and chopped nuts.

tasteofhome

fudgy pinwheel cookies

Maureen Devlin
Chandler, Arizona

These easy, good looking cookies are one of my favorites for the holiday season.

tasteofhome

cathedral window cookies

YIELD: ABOUT 4-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 package (10-1/2 ounces) pastel marshmallows
- 1 cup chopped walnuts, optional
- 2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup butter, cubed

1. Place marshmallows and nuts if desired in a large bowl; set aside. In a heavy saucepan, melt chocolate chips and butter over medium-low heat. Pour over marshmallow mixture and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.
2. Shape marshmallow mixture into a 12-in. roll; wrap in waxed paper. Refrigerate for 4 hours or until firm. Unwrap and cut into 3/8-in. slices; cut slices in half.

Tip

To separate sticky marshmallows, I place a spoonful of powdered sugar in the bag and shake it well. A few stubborn marshmallows might still need to be separated by hand, but this generally works great. KERI W., PROVO, UTAH

fudgy pinwheel cookies

YIELD: ABOUT 2-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder

FILLING:

- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon shortening
- 1 cup finely chopped walnuts
- 1/3 cup sweetened condensed milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolk and vanilla. Combine the flour, salt and baking powder; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well.
2. Roll out the dough into a 12-in. x 10-in. rectangle between two sheets of waxed paper; transfer to a baking sheet. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.
3. In a small microwave-safe bowl, melt chocolate chips and shortening. Stir in the walnuts, milk and vanilla. Remove waxed paper from dough; spread with filling. Tightly roll up jelly-roll style, starting with a long side. Wrap in plastic wrap; refrigerate for 2 hours or until firm.
4. Unwrap and cut into 1/4-in. slices. Place 2 in. apart on lightly greased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes or until set. Remove to wire racks. Store in an airtight container.

rosettes

Rita Christianson
Glenburn, North Dakota

Shaped like delicate snowflakes, these crisp rosettes make a lovely winter dessert. We make these Norwegian treats for Christmas and other special occasions.

taste of home

tea cakes with butter frosting

Sandy Glenn
Booneville, Mississippi

This is an old-fashioned recipe that was given to me by a friend's grandmother. You can easily tint the frosting with food coloring for a festive look throughout the year.

taste of home

rosettes

YIELD: ABOUT 2-1/2 DOZEN.

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- Oil for deep-fat frying
- Confectioners' sugar

1 In a small bowl, beat the eggs, milk, sugar and salt. Add flour; beat until smooth. In a deep-fat fryer or electric skillet, heat 2-1/2 in. of oil to 375°. Place rosette iron in hot oil for 30 seconds.

2 Blot iron on paper towels, then dip iron in batter to three-fourths the way up the sides (do not let batter run over top of iron). Immediately place in hot oil; loosen rosette with fork and remove iron.

3 Fry for 1-2 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Remove to a wire rack covered with paper towels. Repeat with the remaining batter. Sprinkle with the confectioners' sugar before serving.

Tip

When deep frying, always follow the oil temperature recommended in recipes. If the oil is too hot, the foods will brown too fast and not be done in the center. If the oil is below the recommended temperature, the foods will absorb oil and taste greasy. TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

tea cakes with butter frosting

YIELD: ABOUT 5-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup buttermilk

FROSTING:

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 to 5 tablespoons milk
- Food coloring and colored sugars, optional

1 In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; add to the creamed mixture alternately with buttermilk. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or until easy to handle.

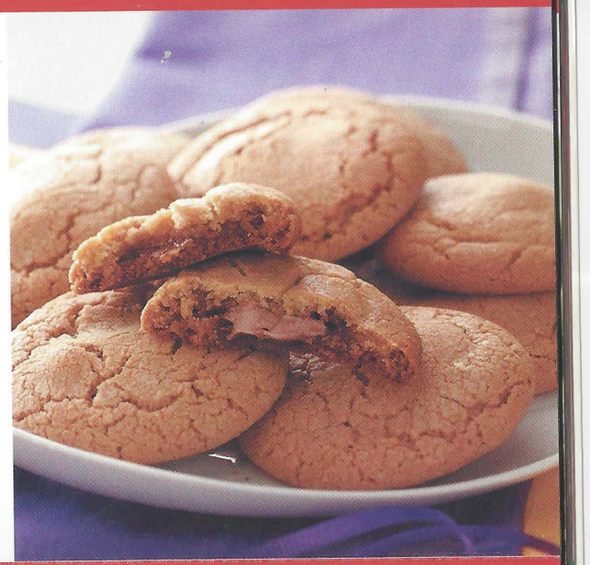
2 On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to 1/4-in. thickness. Cut with floured 2-1/2-in. cookie cutters. Using a floured spatula, place 1 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool completely.

3 In a large bowl, cream the butter, sugar, vanilla and enough milk to achieve spreading consistency. Add food coloring if desired. Frost cookies; sprinkle with colored sugars if desired.

surprise crinkles

Lola Fensky
Moundridge, Kansas

I created this recipe by trial and error using many different kinds of candy. Milky Ways were the secret "surprise" my family liked best.



taste of home

cherry christmas slices

Katie Koziolek
Hartland, Minnesota

Brilliant red and green candied cherries add extra sparkle to these delicious holiday cookies. What I really like best is that this recipe is easy to mix up ahead of time. In fact, I've often made the dough in November and kept it in the freezer until I needed it in December!

taste of home

surprise crinkles

YIELD: 9 DOZEN.

- 1 cup shortening
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups packed brown sugar
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 2 packages (13.3 ounces *each*) fun-size Milky Way candy bars

1. In a large bowl, cream the shortening, butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda, cinnamon and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture and mix well.
2. Roll into 1-1/2-in. balls. Cut each candy bar into fourths; push one portion into the center of each ball, completely covering candy with dough. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets.
3. Bake at 350° for 12-14 minutes or until golden brown and surface cracks. Remove to wire racks to cool.

Tip After using a measuring cup for shortening, use it to measure sugar, too. Once the sugar is poured out, use a spatula to easily scoop out the remaining sugar and shortening at the same time. KATHY S., DALTON, PENNSYLVANIA

cherry christmas slices

YIELD: ABOUT 11 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups red and green candied cherries, halved
- 1 cup pecan halves

1. In a bowl, cream the butter and sugar. Add egg and vanilla; beat until fluffy. Add flour; mix well. Stir in cherries and pecans. Chill for 1 hour.
2. Shape dough into three 10-in. rolls; wrap in plastic wrap and place in a freezer bag. Freeze up to 2 months or until ready to bake. To bake, cut frozen rolls into 1/8-in. slices.
3. Place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 325° for 10-12 minutes or until edges are golden brown. Cool on wire racks.

butter brickle biscotti

Darlene Brenden
Salem, Oregon

These twice-baked toffee cookies are a must with coffee at Christmastime. They also make a great gift from the kitchen when several slices are wrapped in plastic wrap and tucked into a pretty mug.

taste of home

chocolate-covered cherry cookies

Veronica Strange
Glocester, Rhode Island

I first tasted these cookies during a "cookie swap" at work a few years ago. Now I make them every holiday for our family get-together. People who haven't had them are always delighted by the "hidden treasure" inside.

taste of home

butter brickle biscotti

YIELD: ABOUT 2-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 package (7-1/2 *or* 8 ounces) English toffee bits *or* almond brickle chips

1 In a large bowl, cream butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in toffee bits.

2 Divide dough in half. On a parchment paper-lined baking sheet, shape each portion into a 10-in. x 2-1/2-in. rectangle. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

3 Bake at 350° for 30-35 minutes or until golden brown. Cool for 10 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board; cut diagonally with a serrated knife into 1/2-in. slices.

4 Place slices cut side down on ungreased baking sheets. Bake for 20-24 minutes or until golden brown, turning once. Remove to wire racks to cool. Store in an airtight container.

Tip

Store biscotti in airtight containers. If decorated with a coating, stack them between sheets of waxed or parchment paper. Biscotti also freeze well, but it's best to decorate them after removing them from the freezer.
TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

chocolate-covered cherry cookies

YIELD: 2 DOZEN.

- 24 maraschino cherries
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon maraschino cherry juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk chocolate chips, *divided*
- 1/2 teaspoon shortening

1 Pat cherries with paper towels to remove excess moisture; set aside. In a large bowl, cream butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in cherry juice and vanilla. Combine flour and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or until dough is easy to handle.

2 Insert a chocolate chip into each maraschino cherry. Wrap a tablespoon of dough around each maraschino cherry. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets.

3 Bake at 350° for 15-17 minutes or until set and edges are lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool.

4 In a microwave, melt remaining chips and shortening; stir until smooth. Dip tops of cookies in melted chocolate; allow excess to drip off. Place on wax paper; let stand until set. Store in an airtight container.

cranberry nut cookies

Machelle Wall
Rosamond, California

In fall, I stock up on fresh cranberries and freeze them so I can make these cookies throughout the year. Tangy cranberries are a nice addition to a buttery cookie.

taste of home

mocha cookie pretzels

Taste of Home Test Kitchen

Looking for a little something special to bake up for the holidays? Try these elegant mocha-frosted, pretzel-shaped cookies. They're coated with a chocolate glaze and decorated with white chocolate. They taste wonderful with coffee and make an eye-catching addition to any cookie platter.

taste of home

cranberry nut cookies

YIELD: 5 DOZEN.

- 2/3 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup ground walnuts
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 2-1/2 cups halved fresh *or* frozen cranberries
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg, milk and lemon juice. Combine the flour, ground walnuts, baking powder, salt and baking soda; gradually add to the creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in the cranberries and chopped walnuts.
2. Drop by heaping tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart onto lightly greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 16-18 minutes or until golden brown. Remove to wire racks to cool.

Tip

I like to keep fresh lemon juice on hand because it's such an easy way to add refreshing flavor to many recipes. After juicing the lemons, I freeze the juice in ice cube trays. Then I simply defrost them as I need them.
JUDY M., SOUTH BEND, INDIANA

mocha cookie pretzels

YIELD: 4 DOZEN.

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 squares (1 ounce *each*) unsweetened chocolate, melted and cooled
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups cake flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

GLAZE:

- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon shortening
- 1 teaspoon light corn syrup
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 3 to 5 tablespoons hot brewed coffee
- 2 squares (1 ounce *each*) white baking chocolate, chopped
- Green colored sugar, optional

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg. Beat in melted chocolate and vanilla. Combine flour and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or until dough is easy to handle.
2. Divide dough into fourths; divide each portion into 12 pieces. Shape each piece into a 6 in. rope; twist into a pretzel shape. Place 1 in. apart onto lightly greased baking sheets.
3. Bake at 400° for 7-9 minutes or until set. Remove to wire racks to cool.
4. For glaze, in a microwave, melt semisweet chips, shortening and corn syrup; stir until smooth. Stir in confectioners' sugar and enough coffee to achieve a glaze consistency. Dip cookies in glaze; allow excess to drip off. Place on waxed paper until set.
5. In a microwave, melt white chocolate at 30% power; stir until smooth. Drizzle over cookies. Decorate with green sugar if desired; let stand until set.

nuts-about-you cookie sticks

Taste of Home Test Kitchen

Here is a fancy meal finale that couldn't be quicker to whip up. Start with purchased cookies, dip in a rich, creamy chocolate and peanut-butter coating, dust with nuts or sprinkles, and serve with your favorite after-dinner beverage. Make several batches to serve a group or use as a hostess gift.

tasteofhome

aniseed biscotti

Elizabeth Sparano
Marion, Iowa

My husband, Joe, is Italian, and his mother was a great cook. She made wonderful biscotti, which are popular Italian dipping cookies. She never used a recipe, but I asked her to write it down for me. I was delighted when she did.

tasteofhome

nuts-about-you cookie sticks

YIELD: 2 SERVINGS.

- 1/4 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 3/4 teaspoon shortening
- 1-1/2 teaspoons creamy peanut butter
- 4 French vanilla Pirouette cookies
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts

1. In a microwave, melt the chocolate chips, shortening and peanut butter; stir until smooth. Dip one end of each cookie into chocolate mixture; allow excess to drip off. Sprinkle with nuts. Place on waxed paper; let stand until set.

Tip **Each of these cookie sticks could be tied with a seasonal colored ribbon (see photo on front of the card) if you're sharing them as a gift or making them for your holiday cookie tray.** TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

aniseed biscotti

YIELD: ABOUT 3 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3/4 cup slivered almonds
- 2 to 3 tablespoons aniseed
- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons shortening

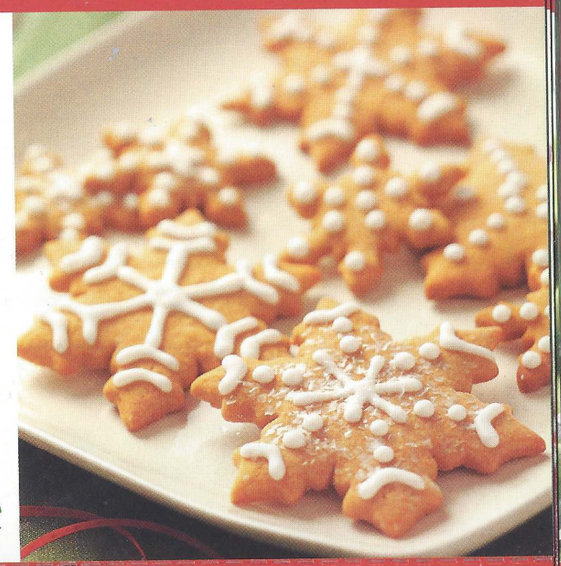
1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Combine flour and baking powder; add to the creamed mixture. Stir in almonds and aniseed. Divide dough into thirds; shape into three 10-in. x 3-in. rectangles on a greased baking sheet.
2. Bake at 325° for 25-30 minutes or until golden brown. Carefully remove to wire racks; cool completely.
3. Transfer to a cutting board; cut diagonally with a serrated knife into 3/4-in. slices. Place slices cut side down on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 325° for 12-16 minutes or until firm and golden brown, turning once. Remove to wire racks to cool.
4. In a microwave, melt chocolate chips and shortening; stir until smooth. Drizzle over biscotti. Let stand until chocolate is set. Refrigerate in an airtight container with waxed paper between layers.

butterscotch gingerbread cookies

Kara Cook
Elk Ridge, Utah

Every time I make these wonderful cookies, the spicy aroma takes me back to my childhood. I helped Mom make and deliver them to neighbors.

tasteofhome

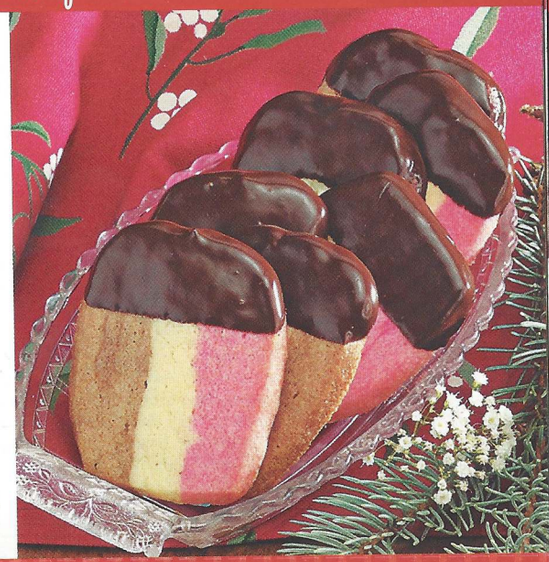


chocolate coconut neapolitans

Lena Marie Brownell
Rockland, Massachusetts

These yummy striped cookies with a chocolaty twist are easy and fun to make. You can make the dough ahead of time and bake the next day.

tasteofhome



butterscotch gingerbread cookies

YIELD: ABOUT 2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 packages (3-1/2 ounces *each*) cook-and-serve butterscotch pudding mix
- 3 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1. In a large bowl, cream the butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs. Combine the flour, pudding mixes, ginger, baking powder and cinnamon; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or until easy to handle.
2. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/4-in. thickness. Cut with lightly floured cookie cutters. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets.
3. Bake at 350° for 6-8 minutes or until firm. Remove to wire racks to cool. Decorate as desired.

Tip

I make my holiday cutout cookies ahead and freeze them without frosting. They keep better that way. As needed, I thaw the cookies and frost them. They taste and look fresh-baked. JEAN M., SCANDINAVIA, WISCONSIN

chocolate coconut neapolitans

YIELD: 5-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 4 drops red food coloring
- 1/2 cup flaked coconut, finely chopped
- 4-1/2 teaspoons chocolate syrup
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1-1/2 teaspoons shortening

1. Line a 9-in. x 5-in. loaf pan with waxed paper; set aside. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well.
2. Divide dough into thirds. Add almond extract and red food coloring to one portion; spread evenly into prepared pan. Add coconut to second portion; spread evenly over first layer. Add chocolate syrup to third portion; spread over second layer. Cover with foil; freeze for 4 hours or overnight.
3. Unwrap loaf and cut in half lengthwise. Cut each portion widthwise into 1/4-in. slices. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 12-14 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool.
4. In a microwave, melt chocolate chips and shortening; stir until smooth. Dip one end of each cookie into chocolate; allow excess to drip off. Place on waxed paper; let stand until set.

chocolate-dipped orange cookies

Linda Call
Falun, Kansas

These tender cookies are pretty to look at—and the combination of cream cheese, orange, chocolate and almonds makes them irresistible!

taste of home

lemon stars

Jacqueline Hill
Norwalk, Ohio

Each one of these cookies has a citrusy zing and a light, crisp texture. The star theme makes them ideal for the Christmas season.

taste of home

chocolate-dipped orange cookies

YIELD: 6 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons grated orange peel
- 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup finely chopped blanched almonds

GLAZE:

- 5 squares (1 ounce *each*) semisweet chocolate
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup finely chopped blanched almonds

1. In a large bowl, cream the butter, cream cheese and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in vanilla and orange peel. Combine the flour and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in almonds.
2. Roll into 1-in. balls. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Flatten with a glass dipped in sugar. Bake at 325° for 20-25 minutes or until firm. Remove to wire racks to cool.
3. For glaze, in a microwave, melt chocolate and butter; stir until smooth. Dip each cookie halfway into chocolate; shake off excess. Immediately sprinkle with the almonds. Place on waxed paper until set.

lemon stars

YIELD: 9 DOZEN.

- 1/2 cup butter-flavored shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1-1/2 teaspoons lemon extract
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 2-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon *each* baking soda and salt

FROSTING:

- 1-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 6 tablespoons butter
- 3/4 teaspoon lemon extract
- 3 drops yellow food coloring, optional
- 3 to 4 tablespoons milk

Yellow colored sugar, optional

1. In a large bowl, cream shortening and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and extract. Stir in sour cream and peel. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Divide dough into three balls; cover and refrigerate for 3 hours or until easy to handle.
2. Remove one portion of dough from the refrigerator at a time. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/4-in. thickness. Cut with a floured 2-in. star cookie cutter. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets.
3. Bake at 375° for 6-8 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool.
4. For frosting, in a bowl, combine the confectioners' sugar, butter, extract, food coloring if desired and enough milk to achieve spreading consistency. Frost cookies; sprinkle with colored sugar if desired.

snowman sugar cookies

Jean Wardrip Burr
Hope Mills, North Carolina

Store-bought dough speeds up the preparation time of these cute cookies. They're so easy that the whole family—even little kids—can help decorate them.

taste of home

sweet potato spice cookies

Ruth Shaffer
Elizabethville, Pennsylvania

Shredded sweet potatoes, butterscotch chips, pecans, coconut and spices are creatively combined in this one-of-a-kind cookie that always brings rave reviews.

taste of home

snowman sugar cookies

YIELD: 2 DOZEN.

- 1 tube (18 ounces) refrigerated sugar cookie dough
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 48 miniature semisweet chocolate chips
- 24 candy corn candies
- 1/2 cup red-hot candies

1. Cut cookie dough into 1/4-in. slices. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 8-12 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool for 2 minutes before removing to wire racks to cool completely.
2. For frosting, in a small bowl, cream shortening and butter. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar. Beat in milk and vanilla until smooth. Spread over cookies. Decorate with chocolate chips, candy corn and red-hots.

Tip

Use a thin, sharp knife to slice through refrigerated cookie dough. Cut one roll at a time, keeping additional rolls refrigerated until ready to use. After each slice, rotate the roll to avoid flattening out one side of the roll.
TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

sweet potato spice cookies

YIELD: 7 DOZEN.

- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup finely shredded uncooked sweet potato
- 3 tablespoons orange juice concentrate
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1-1/4 cups quick-cooking oats
- 1 cup butterscotch chips
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1 cup chopped pecans

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg, sweet potato and orange juice concentrate. Combine the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, baking soda, salt and nutmeg; gradually add to the creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in the remaining ingredients.
2. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls 2 in. apart onto greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 14-16 minutes or until firm. Remove to wire racks to cool.

spice spritz cookies

Taste of Home Test Kitchen

Tempting at a tea party or on any cookie tray, these crisp confections have a tantalizing twist—they get their great flavor from pumpkin pie spice!

tasteofhome

jumbo chocolate chip cookies

Jackie Ruckwardt
Cottage Grove, Oregon

These gourmet cookies are my most asked for recipe. Chock-full of coconut and chocolate chips and dipped in white candy coating, they are truly a chocolate-lover's delight.

tasteofhome

spice spritz cookies

YIELD: ABOUT 5 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2-1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- Red and green colored sugar

1. In a small bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add egg and vanilla; mix well. Combine the flour, baking powder and pumpkin pie spice; gradually add to the creamed mixture.
2. Using a cookie press fitted with the disk of your choice, press dough 2 in. apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Sprinkle with colored sugar. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Remove to wire racks to cool.

Tip

Some recipes for spritz cookies say to chill the dough, but this makes pressing difficult. Instead, I chill my cookie sheets. The room-temperature dough presses out quickly, and the chilled sheets keep the dough from spreading too fast. ARLENE M., BRECKSVILLE, OHIO

jumbo chocolate chip cookies

YIELD: ABOUT 2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2-2/3 cups flaked coconut
- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup milk chocolate chips
- 5 ounces white candy coating, chopped, optional

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in the coconut and chips. Shape 3 tablespoonfuls of dough into a ball; repeat with remaining dough.
2. Place balls 3 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 12-18 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool.
3. In a microwave, melt candy coating if desired; stir until smooth. Dip one end of cooled cookies in candy coating. Allow excess to drip off. Place on waxed paper; let stand until set.

peppermint meltaways

Denise Wheeler
Newaygo, Michigan

This recipe is very pretty and festive-looking on a cookie platter. I often cover a plate of these meltaways with red or green plastic wrap and a bright holiday bow in one corner to give as a gift. And yes, they really do melt in your mouth!

spice cutout cookies

Lyn Chapman
Provo, Utah

My husband especially loves gingersnaps and gingerbread. He was delighted when I made these cookies since they offered a ginger flavor but with a new twist. At only 1 gram of fat apiece, the whimsical treats make a sensible addition to a Christmas cookie collection or New Year's dessert buffet.

peppermint meltaways

YIELD: 3-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup cornstarch

FROSTING:

- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 2 to 3 drops red food coloring, optional
- 1/2 cup crushed peppermint candies

1. In a small bowl, cream butter and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the extract. Combine flour and cornstarch; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well.
2. Shape into 1-in. balls. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until bottoms are lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool.
3. In a small bowl, beat butter until fluffy. Add the confectioners' sugar, milk, extract and food coloring if desired; beat until smooth. Spread over cooled cookies; sprinkle with crushed candies. Store in an airtight container.

Tip

Crush leftover peppermint candies or candy canes and add them to chocolate chip cookie dough to create minty chocolate chip treats. Sometimes I grind the candy in the food processor or blender until they become a fine powder, which I use to sweeten hot tea instead of sugar. JOY K., MUKWONAGO, WISCONSIN

spice cutout cookies

YIELD: 6 DOZEN.

- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup prune baby food
- 3/4 cup molasses
- 1 egg
- 3 tablespoons fat-free milk
- 3-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons *each* ground ginger and ground cinnamon
- 1-1/2 teaspoons aniseed, crushed
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon fennel seed, crushed

FROSTING:

- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 5 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 to 5 tablespoons fat-free milk

Food coloring, optional

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the baby food, molasses, egg and milk; mix well. Combine the flour, ginger, cinnamon, aniseed, baking soda, cloves and fennel seed; gradually add to creamed mixture. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours or until easy to handle.
2. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 3/16-in. thickness. Cut with a floured 2-in. cookie cutter. Place 1 in. apart on baking sheets coated with cooking spray. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes or until edges are firm. Remove to wire racks to cool.
3. For frosting, in a large bowl, cream butter and confectioners' sugar. Beat in vanilla and enough milk to achieve spreading consistency. Add food coloring if desired. Decorate cookies as desired.

swedish butter cookies

Jo Chlopowiecz
Tucson, Arizona

Among our large family's Christmas Eve traditions is enjoying these delectable cookies—one of the 20 varieties my sister bakes for the holiday. They have a pleasing pecan flavor and are so buttery and delicate, they almost melt in your mouth.

taste of home

fancy peanut butter cookies

Janet Hooper
Emporium, Pennsylvania

I always received compliments on my moist and chewy peanut butter cookies. To make them even more special, I decided to frost and decorate them.

taste of home

swedish butter cookies

YIELD: ABOUT 5-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 egg, *separated*
- 1 tablespoon half-and-half cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 cup finely chopped pecans
- Additional chopped pecans
- Halved red maraschino cherries *or* red jelly of your choice

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar. Beat in egg yolk, cream and vanilla. Combine the flour and baking powder; gradually add to creamed mixture. Stir in finely chopped pecans. Roll into 3/4-in. balls.
2. In a small bowl, beat egg white. Dip balls in egg white, then roll in additional pecans. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets.
3. Using the end of a wooden spoon handle, make an indentation in the center of each ball. Top each ball with a cherry half or fill with jelly. Bake at 350° for 12-15 minutes or until cookies are lightly browned. Carefully remove to wire racks to cool.

fancy peanut butter cookies

YIELD: 7-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup shortening
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1 cup *each* sugar and packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt

FROSTING:

- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 1/4 cup shortening
- 1/4 cup peanut butter
- 4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Dash salt

ICING:

- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips, melted
- 2 tablespoons milk

1. In a large bowl, cream the shortening, peanut butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in milk and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture and mix well.
2. Roll into 1-in. balls. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Remove to wire racks.
3. For frosting, in a large bowl, cream the butter, shortening, peanut butter and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the milk, vanilla and salt until smooth. Frost cookies. Combine melted chips and milk; drizzle over frosting.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reduced-fat or generic brands of peanut butter are not recommended for this recipe.

candy cane cookies

Taste of Home Test Kitchen

Kids of all ages will want to pitch in when it comes time to roll the ropes of colored dough for these cute candy canes. Peppermint extract carries the flavor on through, so the cookies taste as good as they look.

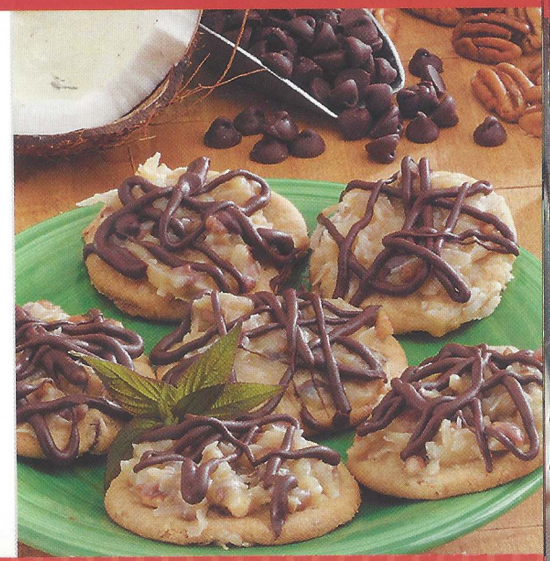
taste of home

coconut pecan cookies

Diane Selich
Vassar, Michigan

With chocolate chips and coconut in the batter and a yummy pecan-coconut frosting, these cookies will remind you of German chocolate cake. A drizzle of chocolate tops them off in a festive way.

taste of home



candy cane cookies

YIELD: 3 DOZEN.

- 1/2 tube refrigerated sugar cookie dough, softened
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1/2 teaspoon red food coloring

1. In a large bowl, beat the cookie dough, flour and extract until smooth. Divide dough in half; mix food coloring into one portion.
2. Shape 1 teaspoon of white dough into a 6-in. rope. Shape 1 teaspoon of red dough into a 6-in. rope. Place ropes side by side; press together lightly and twist.
3. Place on an ungreased baking sheet; curve top of cookie to form handle of cane. Repeat with remaining dough, placing cookies 2 in. apart on baking sheets.
4. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until set. Cool for 2 minutes before carefully removing to wire racks.

Tip

Instead of scooping up cookie dough one teaspoonful at a time, pat dough into a rectangle on a baking sheet and freeze until almost solid. Slice the rectangle horizontally and vertically at even intervals, forming a grid. Pick up and roll individual pieces for baking. Your cookies will all be the same size.
MAXINE B., MT. GILEAD, OHIO

coconut pecan cookies

YIELD: 6-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 can (5 ounces) evaporated milk
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup butter, cubed
- 1-1/4 cups flaked coconut
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

COOKIE DOUGH:

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups (24 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips, *divided*
- 1/4 cup flaked coconut

1. For frosting, in a large saucepan, combine the egg, milk, sugar and butter. Cook and stir over medium-low heat for 10-12 minutes or until slightly thickened and mixture reaches 160° or is thick enough to coat the back of a metal spoon. Stir in coconut and pecans. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in 2 cups chips and coconut.
3. Drop by tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool for 10 minutes before removing to wire racks to cool completely.
4. In a microwave, melt the remaining chocolate chips; stir until smooth. Spread frosting over cooled cookies; drizzle with melted chocolate.

crisp chocolate chip cookies

Mandy Falkner
Greenacres, Washington

A friend gave me this recipe quite a while ago, and I like to make them for our five children and 18 grandkids. If you don't want these cookies to disappear quickly, you'd better hide them!

taste of home

caramel swirls

Jan Smith
Star, Texas

In my opinion, cookies are the best dessert to make and to eat! With a crisp outside and chewy caramel filling, these are definitely one of my favorites.

taste of home

crisp chocolate chip cookies

YIELD: ABOUT 3 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup canola oil
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups (12 ounces) chocolate chips
- 1 cup quick-cooking *or* old-fashioned oats
- 1 cup cornflakes *or* crisp rice cereal

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Add the oil, egg and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; add to creamed mixture.
2. Stir in the chocolate chips, oats, and cornflakes or cereal. Drop by spoonfuls onto greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 12-14 minutes. Remove to wire racks.

Tip

Before either quick-cooking or old-fashioned oats are processed, the hull is removed and they are cleaned, toasted and cleaned again. Old-fashioned oats are steamed and flattened with huge rollers. They take about 15 minutes to cook. Quick-cooking oats have been cut into two or three pieces before being steamed and rolled. They take about 5 minutes to prepare. Both can be used interchangeably, although old-fashioned oats may give your recipe more texture. TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

caramel swirls

YIELD: 6-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 teaspoon maple flavoring
- 2-3/4 cups all-purpose flour

FILLING:

- 30 caramels
- 2 packages (3 ounces *each*) cream cheese, softened

1. In a large bowl, cream the butter, cream cheese and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolk and maple flavoring. Gradually add flour and mix well. Refrigerate for 2 hours or until easy to handle.
2. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt caramels; stir until smooth. Stir in cream cheese until blended; set aside. Divide dough in half. Roll each portion between waxed paper to 1/4-in. thickness. Spread caramel mixture over dough to within 1/2 in. of edges.
3. Roll up tightly jelly-roll style, starting with a long side. Wrap rolls in plastic wrap; refrigerate for 4 hours or until firm.
4. Unwrap and cut into 1/4-in. slices. Place 1 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 12-14 minutes or until golden brown. Remove to wire racks to cool.

chips galore cookies

Bennet Barlean
Nooksack, Washington

I created this recipe one day when I decided to give chocolate chip cookies a new twist. My kids loved the variation, and I've been making these cookies ever since.

taste of home

soft molasses cutout cookies

Vivian Person
Balaton, Minnesota

I received this recipe years ago, when my husband and I managed a retirement home. We'd always put out homemade cookies for morning and afternoon coffee, and these were the first to disappear.

taste of home

chips galore cookies

YIELD: 2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter-flavored shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup milk chocolate chips
- 3/4 cup peanut butter chips
- 3/4 cup English toffee bits *or* almond brickle chips
- 3/4 cup flaked coconut
- 2/3 cup vanilla *or* white chips

1. In a large bowl, cream shortening and sugars. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture. Stir in the remaining ingredients.
2. Drop by 1/4 cupfuls 2 in. apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 12-14 minutes or until golden brown. Remove to wire racks.

Tip

Press shortening into a dry measuring cup with a spatula to make sure it is solidly packed without air pockets. With a metal spatula or flat side of a knife, level with the rim. Shortenings also come in sticks and may be measured like butter. TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

soft molasses cutout cookies

YIELD: ABOUT 6-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup shortening
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup dark molasses
- 5-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup water
- Frosting *or* confectioners' sugar, optional

1. In a large bowl, cream shortening and sugars until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in molasses. Combine the flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon and salt; add to the creamed mixture alternately with water, beating well after each addition. Cover and refrigerate for 3 hours or until easy to handle.
2. On a lightly floured surface, roll out to 1/4-in. thickness. Cut with 2-1/2-in. cookie cutters dipped in flour. Place 1 in. apart on greased baking sheets.
3. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until edges are firm. Remove to wire racks to cool. Frost or dust with confectioners' sugar if desired.

maine mud cookies

Kathleen Winslow
Naples, Maine

Every year as winter makes way for spring, we here in Maine experience a fifth season we call "mud season." I make this special treat as a sweet way to ride out that messy stretch. These cookies bring a smile to every face.

cran-orange icebox cookies

Nancy Rollag
Kewaskum, Wisconsin

These are a favorite cookie of my family around Christmas. The cran-orange flavor makes them special and deliciously different.

maine mud cookies

YIELD: 4 DOZEN.

- 2-1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup baking cocoa
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1/3 cup unsweetened applesauce

1. In a bowl, combine the flour, cocoa, sugars, baking soda and salt. Stir in buttermilk and applesauce (dough will be thick and moist).
2. Drop by tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart on baking sheets coated with cooking spray. Spread with a fork to make irregular shapes.
3. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until firm. Remove to wire racks.

Tip

There are a number of substitutes you can use in place of buttermilk in baking. For each cup of buttermilk, you can use 1 tablespoon of white vinegar or lemon juice plus enough milk to measure 1 cup. Stir, then let stand for 5 minutes. You can also use 1 cup of plain yogurt or 1-3/4 teaspoons cream of tartar plus 1 cup milk. TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

cran-orange icebox cookies

YIELD: 4 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons grated orange peel
- 2/3 cup chopped dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 8 to 10 drops red food coloring, optional

1. In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg, milk and vanilla. Combine flour and baking powder; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well.
2. Transfer 1 cup of dough to a small bowl; stir in orange peel and set aside. Add the cranberries, pecans and food coloring if desired to remaining dough; divide in half.
3. Line an 8-in. x 4-in. loaf pan with waxed paper. Press one portion of cranberry dough evenly into pan; top with orange dough, then remaining cranberry dough. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours or until firm.
4. Remove dough from pan; cut in half lengthwise. Cut each portion into 1/4-in. slices. Place 1 in. apart on lightly greased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Remove to wire racks. Store in an airtight container.

date nut icebox cookies

Gladys Maurer
Laramie, Wyoming

A dear friend shared this recipe with me many years ago. They've become a much-requested treat at my house, so it's a good thing the recipe yields a lot.

tasteofhome

chocolate mint whoopie pies

Taste of Home Test Kitchen

These cute sandwich cookies would be a pretty and popular addition to any holiday goodie tray.

tasteofhome

date nut icebox cookies

YIELD: ABOUT 8 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup shortening
- 2-1/2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon light corn syrup
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup finely chopped walnuts
- 1 cup finely chopped dates

1. In a large bowl, cream the butter, shortening and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla and corn syrup. Combine the flour, salt and baking soda; gradually add to the creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in walnuts and dates.
2. Shape into four 6-in. rolls; wrap each in plastic wrap. Refrigerate overnight.
3. Unwrap and cut into 1/4-in. slices. Place 2-1/2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 10-12 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool for 2-3 minutes before removing to wire racks.

Tip

When a bottle of corn syrup is getting low, it takes a while for the remaining syrup to pour out. To hasten the process, I run the capped bottle under hot water. The corn syrup pours out quickly with no waste.
VIVIAN T., WESTVILLE, INDIANA

chocolate mint whoopie pies

YIELD: 1-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 egg
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup baking cocoa
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons fat-free milk, *divided*
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1-1/3 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon mint extract
- 4 drops green food coloring, optional

1. In a large bowl, beat sugar and oil until crumbly. Add egg; beat for 1 minute. Combine the flour, cocoa, baking soda and salt. Gradually beat into sugar mixture. Add 2 tablespoons milk and mix well. Roll dough into 36 balls.
2. Place 2 in. apart on baking sheets coated with cooking spray. Coat bottom of a glass with cooking spray, then dip in sugar. Flatten cookies with prepared glass, redipping in sugar as needed.
3. Bake at 425° for 5-6 minutes or until edges are set and tops are cracked. Cool for 2 minutes before removing to wire racks to cool.
4. In a small bowl, combine butter and confectioners' sugar until crumbly. Beat in extract, food coloring if desired and remaining milk. Spread on the bottoms of half of the cookies; top with remaining cookies.

gingerbread boy cookies

Donna Sasser Hinds
Milwaukie, Oregon

Mom always used the same round-headed cookie cutter to make her "boys." They came out of the oven soft and chewy with plenty of traditional molasses-ginger flavor.

taste of home

two-tone christmas cookies

Marie Capobianco
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

I dreamed up this recipe using two of my favorite flavors, pistachio and raspberry. These pink and green cookies are tasty and eye-catching, too. They're perfect for formal or informal gatherings, and everybody likes them.

taste of home

gingerbread boy cookies

YIELD: 3-4 DOZEN.

- 1/2 cup butter, cubed
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 2 teaspoons white vinegar
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

1 In a saucepan, combine the butter, sugar, molasses and vinegar; bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat; cool to lukewarm. Stir in egg. Combine the flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon and salt; stir into molasses mixture to form a soft dough.

2 Divide dough into thirds. Shape each portion into a disk; wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or until easy to handle.

3 On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to 1/4-in. thickness. Cut with a floured 3-in. gingerbread boy cookie cutter. Place on greased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 7-9 minutes or until edges are firm. Remove to wire racks.

Tip

I like to wipe a bit of vegetable oil inside my measuring cup when I'm measuring peanut butter or molasses. This keeps the sticky ingredients from clinging to the cup so I'm sure to get the full measure, and cleanup is a snap.
LYNN H., ST. JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK

two-tone christmas cookies

YIELD: 6-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 2 egg yolks
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 3-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon *each* salt and baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 9 drops green food coloring
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1/3 cup finely chopped pistachios
- 9 drops red food coloring
- 3 tablespoons seedless raspberry preserves
- 2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips, melted
- Additional chopped pistachios, optional

1 In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolks and extracts. Combine the flour, salt, baking powder and baking soda; gradually add to creamed mixture. Divide dough in half. Stir green food coloring, milk and nuts into one portion; mix well. Add red food coloring and jam to the other half.

2 Between two pieces of waxed paper, shape each portion into an 8-in. x 6-in. rectangle. Cut in half lengthwise. Place one green rectangle on a piece of plastic wrap. Top with one pink rectangle; press together lightly. Repeat, forming a second stack. Wrap each in plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

3 Remove one stack from the refrigerator at a time. Unwrap dough; cut in half lengthwise. Return one portion to the refrigerator. Cut remaining portion into 1/8-in. slices. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 7-9 minutes or until set. Remove to wire racks to cool. Repeat with the remaining dough.

4 Drizzle the cooled cookies with melted chocolate. Sprinkle with additional pistachios if desired.

caramel cashew clusters

Karen Daniels
Jefferson City, Missouri

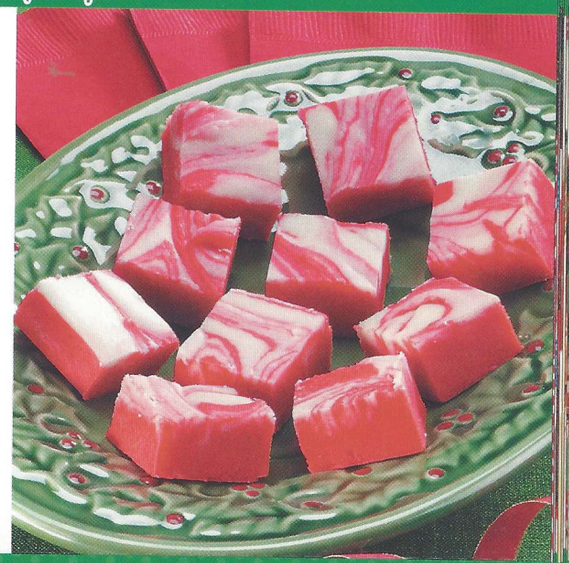
Several years ago, a coworker came across candies like these in a store and asked if I could make them. After some trial and error, I came up with a winning recipe.

taste of home

black cherry swirl fudge

Pauletta Bushnell
Lebanon, Oregon

This colorful treat is sure to satisfy the sweetest tooth in any family! It's always been a favorite with my nine kids, eight grandkids and my Bible study group. I even vary the soft-drink flavors to match other holidays during the year.



taste of home

caramel cashew clusters

YIELD: 2-1/2 DOZEN.

- 2 pounds milk chocolate candy coating, coarsely chopped, *divided*
- 1 cup salted cashew halves
- 28 caramels
- 2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream

1 Line baking sheets with waxed paper and butter the paper; set aside. In a heavy saucepan, melt 1 pound of candy coating. Drop by scant tablespoonfuls onto prepared pans. Let stand until partially set, about 3 minutes. Top each with six or seven cashews. Let stand until completely set.

2 In a small heavy saucepan, combine caramels and cream. Cook and stir over low heat until melted; stir until smooth. Spoon over cashews. Reheat caramel over low heat if it thickens. Melt remaining candy coating; spoon over caramel. Let stand until set.

Tip Stored in an airtight container in a cool dry place, most homemade candy will keep for about 2 to 3 weeks. Fudge and caramels can be wrapped tightly and frozen for up to 1 year. TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

black cherry swirl fudge

YIELD: ABOUT 3 POUNDS.

- 1-1/2 teaspoons plus 3/4 cup butter, *divided*
- 3 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 package (10 to 12 ounces) vanilla or white chips
- 1 jar (7 ounces) marshmallow creme
- 2 envelopes unsweetened black cherry soft drink mix

1 Line a 13-in. x 9-in. pan with foil and grease the foil with 1-1/2 teaspoons butter; set aside. In a heavy saucepan, combine the sugar, cream and remaining butter. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Cook and stir for 4 minutes.

2 Remove from the heat; stir in vanilla chips and marshmallow creme. Pour 1 cup into a bowl; set aside. Stir black cherry drink mix into the remaining marshmallow mixture. Pour into prepared pan. Spoon the reserved marshmallow mixture over top; cut through mixture with a knife to swirl.

3 Refrigerate for 1 hour or until firm. Using foil, lift fudge out of pan. Discard foil; cut into 1-in. squares. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

peanut butter clusters

Pat Maxwell
Taft, California

Four ingredients and 20 minutes...could a fabulous last-minute gift idea be any easier? This chocolate-coated crunch also freezes well, so keep some on hand for drop-in guests.

tasteofhome

peppermint taffy

Elaine Chichura
Kingsley, Pennsylvania

For a fun afternoon activity, get the kids or friends involved in an old-fashioned taffy pull. The soft, chewy taffy has a luscious minty flavor, and it won't stick to the wrapper. You can change the color and flavor, too.

tasteofhome

peanut butter clusters

YIELD: ABOUT 3-1/2 DOZEN.

- 2 cups peanut butter chips
- 1 cup milk chocolate chips
- 1-1/2 cups dry roasted peanuts
- 1 cup crushed ridged potato chips

1 In a microwave-safe bowl, melt peanut butter chips and chocolate chips; stir until smooth. Stir in peanuts and potato chips. Drop by level tablespoonfuls onto waxed paper-lined baking sheets. Refrigerate until firm. Store in an airtight container.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This recipe was tested in a 1,100-watt microwave.

Tip

To prevent candies from exchanging flavors, always store different types of candy in separate containers, using waxed paper between layers. Also keep hard candy and soft candy in different containers because the moisture from the soft candy could cause the hard candy to become sticky.
TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

peppermint taffy

YIELD: 1-3/4 POUNDS.

- 2-1/2 cups sugar
- 1-1/2 cups light corn syrup
- 4 teaspoons white vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk
- 1/4 teaspoon peppermint oil
- Red food coloring

1 Butter a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. pan; set aside. In a heavy large saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup, vinegar and salt. Cook and stir over low heat until sugar is dissolved. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Slowly add the milk; cook and stir until a candy thermometer reads 248° (firm-ball stage).

2 Remove from the heat; stir in the peppermint oil and food coloring, keeping face away from mixture, as odor is very strong. Pour into prepared pan. Let stand for 8 minutes or until cool enough to handle.

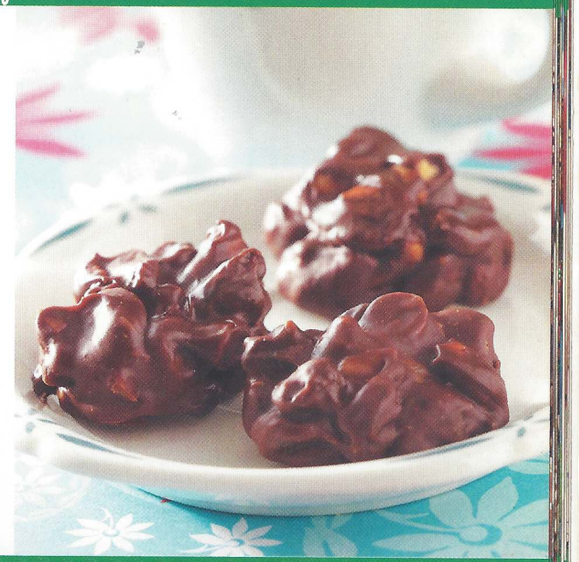
3 With well-buttered fingers, quickly pull candy until firm but pliable (color will become light pink). Pull into a 1/2-in. rope; cut into 1-in. pieces. Wrap each in waxed paper.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

raisin cashew drops

Cheryl Butler
Lake Placid, Florida

At Christmas, I serve these bite-size chocolates in festive paper cups decorated with snowmen or Santas. They're easy to make, and my family loves the salty and sweet flavor combination.



tasteofhome

butterscotch hard candy

Darlene Smithers
Elkhart, Indiana

I love making this classic butterscotch recipe. We think these irresistible candies are better than the store-bought variety... and they sure don't last long!

tasteofhome

raisin cashew drops

YIELD: 2-1/2 POUNDS.

- 2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 tablespoon light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups coarsely chopped cashews
- 2 cups raisins

1. In a heavy saucepan over low heat, melt chocolate chips with milk and corn syrup for 10–12 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat; stir in vanilla until blended. Stir in cashews and raisins.
2. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper–lined baking sheets. Refrigerate for 3 hours or until firm. Store in the refrigerator.

Tip

If the candy mixture isn't required to meet a specific temperature during cooking, feel free to substitute flavored chips of your choice. Marshmallow creme and sweetened condensed milk help stabilize candy mixtures, so substituting flavored chips is a safe bet if either of these ingredients are in the recipe, too. TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

butterscotch hard candy

YIELD: 1-1/2 POUNDS.

- 1 teaspoon plus 1 cup butter, *divided*
- 2-1/2 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon rum extract

1. Butter a 15–in. x 10–in. x 1–in. pan with 1 teaspoon butter; set aside. Cube remaining butter and set aside.
2. In a heavy saucepan, combine the sugar, water and corn syrup. Cover and bring to a boil over medium heat without stirring. Cook, uncovered, until a candy thermometer reads 270° (soft–crack stage). Add honey, salt and remaining butter; stir constantly until the mixture reaches 300° (hard–crack stage).
3. Remove from the heat. Stir in the rum extract. Pour into the prepared pan without scraping; do not spread. Cool for 1–2 minutes or until the candy is almost set. Score into 1–in. squares; cool completely. Break squares apart. Store in an airtight container.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

chocolate peppermint bark

Keslie Houser
Pasco, Washington

These candies are such a snap to make, you only need three ingredients. The chocolate and mint flavors always bring guests back for more.

taste of home

cookie dough truffles

Lanita Dedon
Slaughter, Louisiana

The flavorful filling at the center of these yummy morsels tastes like genuine chocolate chip cookie dough...without the worry of raw eggs. That's what makes them so appealing. Plus, they're easy to make.

taste of home

chocolate peppermint bark

YIELD: ABOUT 1 POUND.

- 6 squares (1 ounce *each*) white baking chocolate
- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup crushed peppermint *or* spearmint candies, *divided*

1. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt white chocolate at 70% power; stir until smooth. Repeat with chocolate chips. Stir 6 tablespoons of crushed candies into each bowl. Drop white chocolate and semisweet chocolate in alternating spoonfuls onto a waxed paper-lined baking sheet.
2. With a metal spatula, cut through the chocolate to swirl, spreading to 1/4-in. thickness. Sprinkle with remaining crushed candies. Chill until firm. Break into pieces. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This recipe was tested in a 1,100-watt microwave.

cookie dough truffles

YIELD: 5-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1-1/2 pounds semisweet candy coating, chopped

1. In a large bowl, cream the butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the vanilla. Gradually add the flour, alternately with milk, beating well after each addition. Stir in the chocolate chips and walnuts. Shape into 1-in. balls; place on waxed paper-lined baking sheets. Loosely cover and refrigerate for 1-2 hours or until firm.
2. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt candy coating; stir until smooth. Dip balls in coating, allowing excess to drip off; place on waxed paper-lined baking sheets. Refrigerate until firm, about 15 minutes. If desired, remelt remaining candy coating and drizzle over candies. Store in the refrigerator.

mocha nut fudge

Brandy LaFountain
Marion, Michigan

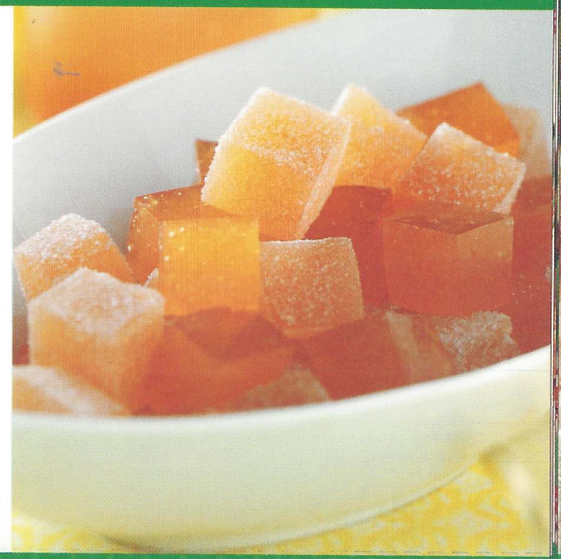
I was lucky enough to inherit my grandmother's cookbook collection along with all of her recipe notations. This fudgy candy earned high marks from that great candy-maker.

tasteofhome

orange gumdrops

Becky Burch
Marceline, Missouri

I get nothing but rave reviews when I make these gumdrops and usually have to prepare three batches. The refreshing orange flavor is a nice change from the usual chocolate holiday candies.



tasteofhome

mocha nut fudge

YIELD: 1 POUND.

- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/3 cup evaporated milk
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee granules
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

1. In a heavy saucepan, combine the brown sugar, milk and corn syrup. Cook and stir over medium heat until mixture comes to a boil and sugar is dissolved; boil for 2 minutes.
2. Remove from the heat; stir in chocolate chips, vanilla and coffee granules with a wooden spoon. Continue stirring until mixture is smooth and thick, about 5 minutes. Stir in walnuts.
3. Shape into two 9-in. logs; wrap each in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight. Unwrap and cut into slices.

Tip Leftover evaporated milk should be transferred from the can to another container for storage. If stored in a covered container in the refrigerator, it can be used safely within 3 days. TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

orange gumdrops

YIELD: ABOUT 6 DOZEN.

- 1 teaspoon plus 1 tablespoon butter, softened, *divided*
- 1 cup *each* sugar and light corn syrup
- 3/4 cup water
- 1 package (1-3/4 ounces) powdered fruit pectin
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1-1/2 teaspoons orange extract
- 1 teaspoon grated orange peel
- 4 drops yellow food coloring
- 1 drop red food coloring
- Additional sugar, optional

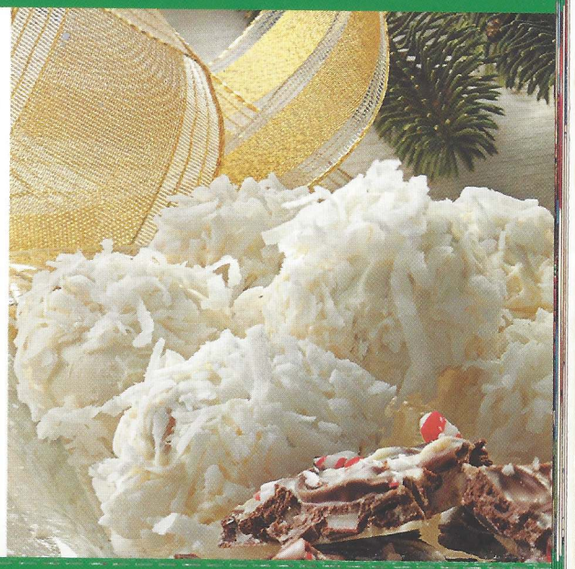
1. Line bottom and sides of a 9-in. x 5-in. loaf pan with foil. Grease foil with 1 teaspoon butter; set aside. Grease bottom and sides of a large heavy saucepan with remaining butter; add sugar and corn syrup. Cook and stir over medium heat until mixture comes to a boil, about 9 minutes. Cook over medium-high heat until a candy thermometer reads 280° (soft-crack stage), stirring occasionally.
2. Meanwhile, in another large saucepan, combine the water, pectin and baking soda (mixture will foam slightly). Cook and stir over high heat until mixture boils, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat; set aside.
3. When corn syrup mixture reaches 280°, remove from the heat. Return pectin mixture to medium-high heat; cook until mixture begins to simmer. Carefully and slowly ladle corn syrup mixture in a very thin stream into pectin mixture, stirring constantly. Cook and stir 1 minute longer.
4. Remove from heat; stir in the extract, peel and food coloring. Transfer to prepared pan. Let stand until firm, about 2 hours. Cut into squares. Roll in additional sugar if desired.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test. Both the corn syrup mixture and pectin mixtures will be very hot. Use caution when pouring the corn syrup mixture into the pectin mixture to avoid splatters.

peanut butter snowballs

Lucille Johnson
Vale, North Carolina

I like to make these coconut-covered balls when the snow is flying outside. I've shared the candies with many of my friends and family members, and everyone loves them.



tasteofhome

layered mint fudge

Denise Hanson
Anoka, Minnesota

I make this festive fudge year-round, but especially at Christmas. I've brought it to many different gatherings and am asked for the recipe every time. I've also entered it in our local fair and won the blue ribbon!

tasteofhome

peanut butter snowballs

YIELD: 3 DOZEN.

- 2 cups nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 cup chunky peanut butter
- 1 cup honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 8 ounces white candy coating, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup shortening
- 3 cups flaked coconut
- Assorted food coloring, optional

1 In a large bowl, combine the milk powder, peanut butter, honey and vanilla. Shape into 1-in. balls. Place on a waxed paper-lined baking sheet. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 minutes.

2 In a microwave-safe bowl, melt candy coating and shortening at 70% power for 1-2 minutes; stir until smooth. If desired, tint some of the candy coating with food coloring. Dip balls into coating, then roll in coconut. Return to baking sheet; let stand until set. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This recipe was tested in a 1,100-watt microwave.

layered mint fudge

YIELD: 1-3/4 POUNDS.

- 1-1/2 teaspoons butter, softened
- 2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk, *divided*
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup vanilla *or* white chips
- 3 teaspoons peppermint extract
- 1 to 2 drops green food coloring

1 Line a 9-in. square pan with foil; grease the foil with butter and set aside. In a heavy saucepan, melt chocolate chips and 1 cup milk over low heat; cook and stir for 5-6 minutes or until smooth. Remove from the heat. Add vanilla; stir for 3-4 minutes or until creamy. Spread half of the mixture into prepared pan. Refrigerate for 10 minutes or until firm. Set remaining chocolate mixture aside.

2 In a heavy saucepan, melt the vanilla chips and remaining milk over low heat; cook and stir for 5-6 minutes or until smooth (mixture will be thick). Remove from heat. Add peppermint extract and food coloring; stir for 3-4 minutes or until creamy. Spread evenly over the chocolate layer. Refrigerate for 10 minutes or until firm.

3 Heat reserved chocolate mixture over low heat until mixture achieves spreading consistency; spread over mint layer. Cover and refrigerate overnight or until firm.

4 Using foil, lift fudge out of pan. Gently peel off foil; cut fudge into 1-in. squares. Store in the refrigerator.

holiday truffles

Taste of Home Test Kitchen

You may be tempted to save this recipe for a special occasion since these smooth, creamy chocolates are divine, but with just a few ingredients, they're easy to make anytime.

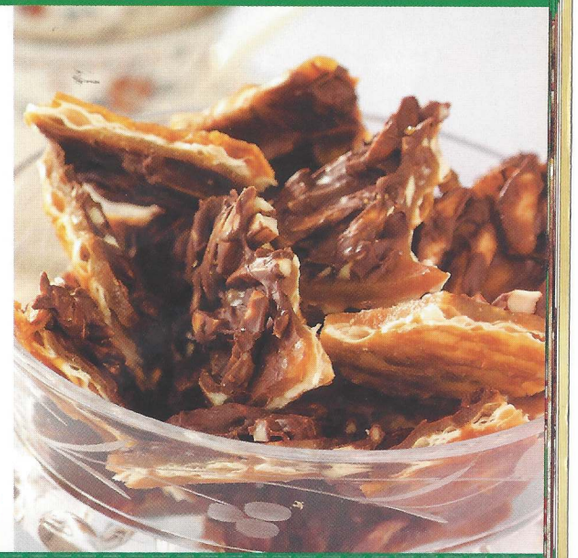
taste of home

almond crunch

Sharalyn Zander
Jacksonville, Alabama

Once you start eating this taste-tempting Passover treat, you may not be able to stop! Matzo crackers are topped with buttery caramel, baked to perfection, then topped with chocolate and slivered almonds!

taste of home



holiday truffles

YIELD: 6 DOZEN.

- 3 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- Finely chopped toasted nuts, flaked coconut, baking cocoa or red and green sprinkles

1. In a microwave, combine chips and milk. Microwave on high for 3 minutes, stirring after 1-1/2 minutes; stir until smooth. Stir in vanilla. Chill for 3 hours or until firm.
2. Shape into 1-in. balls; roll in nuts, coconut, cocoa or sprinkles. Chill 1 hour or until firm. Store covered at room temperature or in the refrigerator.

Tip

Save a bundle on decorating gifts from the kitchen by relying on baskets. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes and are commonly found on sale at craft and variety stores—so be on the lookout for them throughout the year. Save any baskets you've acquired either from a gift you've received or from a purchase you've made for yourself. Line the basket with white or colored tissue paper, then top with candies or cookies that have been bundled in plastic wrap or a resealable plastic bag. Place the basket on a large piece of clear, colored or patterned cellophane; bring the edges of the cellophane up and tie with a ribbon. Add a decorative bow if desired. TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

almond crunch

YIELD: 1 POUND.

- 4 to 6 unsalted saltine matzo crackers
- 1 cup butter, cubed
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 3/4 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon shortening
- 1 cup slivered almonds, toasted

1. Line a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan with foil; line the foil with parchment paper. Arrange the crackers in pan; set aside.
2. In a large heavy saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Stir in brown sugar. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 3-4 minutes or until sugar is dissolved. Spread evenly over the crackers.
3. Bake at 350° for 15-17 minutes (cover loosely with foil if top browns too quickly). Cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, melt chocolate chips and shortening; stir until smooth. Stir in almonds; spread over top. Cool for 1 hour.
4. Break candy into pieces. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or until set. Store in an airtight container.

cream cheese bonbons

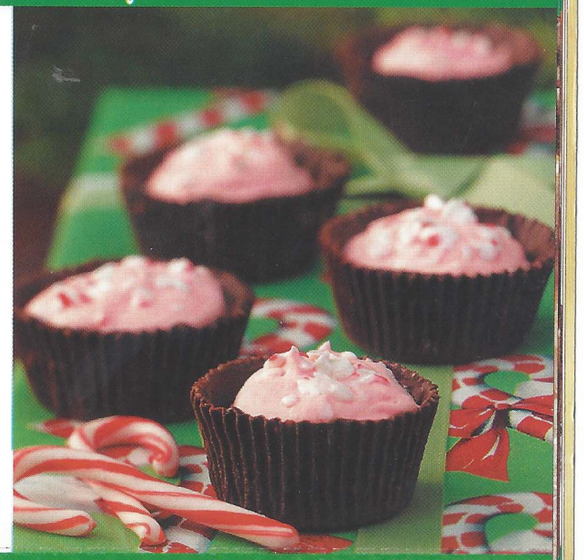
Beverly Coyde
Gasport, New York

These pretty coconut-speckled candies are rolled in grated chocolate, but you could also coat them in finely chopped nuts or chocolate sprinkles. I sometimes substitute almond extract for the vanilla and coat them in chopped toasted almonds. Indulge without the guilt!

mint-mallow chocolate cups

Stephanie Klym
Belfield, North Dakota

These cute filled chocolate cups get gobbled up whenever I set them out. The fluffy mint filling pairs well with the chocolate.



cream cheese bonbons

YIELD: 1-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 package (8 ounces) reduced-fat cream cheese
- Sugar substitute equivalent to 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1 square (1 ounce) unsweetened chocolate, grated

1. In a small bowl, beat the cream cheese, sugar substitute, sugar and vanilla until smooth. Stir in the coconut. Refrigerate for 30 minutes or until easy to handle.
2. Shape into 1-in. balls; roll in grated chocolate. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This recipe was tested with Splenda no-calorie sweetener.

mint-mallow chocolate cups

YIELD: 1-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 12 large marshmallows
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 3 drops red *or* green food coloring
- Dash salt
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 3 tablespoons crushed peppermint *and/or* spearmint candies, *divided*

1. In a microwave, melt chocolate chips; stir until smooth. Brush evenly on the inside of 18 foil miniature muffin cup liners. Refrigerate until set. Add a second coat of chocolate; chill until set.
2. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan over medium-low heat, cook and stir the marshmallows and milk until marshmallows are melted. Remove from the heat. Stir in the extracts, food coloring and salt. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or until thickened.
3. Carefully peel liners from chocolate cups and discard. In a large bowl, beat the cream until stiff peaks form. Fold in the marshmallow mixture and 2 tablespoons crushed candies. Spoon into chocolate cups. Sprinkle with remaining candies. Store in the refrigerator.

almond apricot dips

Cathy Childs
Freeland, Michigan

My family makes these candied apricots every Christmas. We sometimes dip half of the fruit in white candy coating and the other half in chocolate coating.

taste of home

nutty caramels

Lynn Nelson
Kasilof, Alaska

A cousin passed this quick and easy recipe on to me. We make it every Christmas and include the caramels in gift baskets to share with family and friends.

taste of home

almond apricot dips

YIELD: 2 DOZEN.

- 1 package (6 ounces) dried pitted Mediterranean apricots
- 24 whole almonds, toasted
- 4 ounces white candy coating

1 Stuff each apricot with an almond. In a microwave, melt candy coating at 70% power; stir until smooth. Dip each apricot halfway in coating, allowing excess to drip off. Place on a waxed paper–lined baking sheet; refrigerate for 15 minutes or until set. Store in the refrigerator.

Tip

When I melt bulk chocolate or candy coating to coat candies, fruit or pretzels, I like to use my slow cooker. It keeps the chocolate warm for repeated dips.
C.M.H., WALKER, MINNESOTA

nutty caramels

YIELD: 1-1/2 POUNDS.

- 1 teaspoon plus 1/4 cup butter, *divided*
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1 cup chopped nuts
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Melted milk chocolate

1 Line a 9-in. square pan with foil and grease the foil with 1 teaspoon butter; set aside. In a large heavy saucepan, combine the sugar, corn syrup, milk and remaining butter. Cook and stir over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. Bring to a rapid boil, stirring constantly, until a candy thermometer reads 248° (firm-ball stage).

2 Remove from the heat; stir in the nuts and vanilla. Pour into prepared pan (do not scrape the saucepan). Cool completely. Using foil, lift caramels out of pan; discard foil. Cut into small squares or diamonds. Drizzle each with chocolate if desired.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

mint cookie candies

Taste of Home Test Kitchen

These yummy mint chocolate bites are so delightful, you'll find it difficult to eat just one. With a combination of sweetness and crunch from the chocolate cookies, they make pretty holiday gifts with crushed candy canes or other candies on top.

tasteofhome

crispy peanut butter balls

Liz David
St. Catharines, Ontario

I make over 40 different types of cookies and candies during the holidays for friends and family. This is one of my favorite ones to give away as gifts.

tasteofhome

mint cookie candies

YIELD: 4 DOZEN.

- 12 ounces white candy coating, coarsely chopped
- 6 teaspoons shortening, *divided*
- 1/4 teaspoon green food coloring
- 4 mint cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies, crushed
- 2 packages (4.67 ounces *each*) mint Andes candies

1. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt candy coating and 4 teaspoons shortening; stir until smooth. Stir in food coloring. Pour evenly into miniature muffin cup liners. Sprinkle with cookie crumbs.
2. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt mint candies and remaining shortening; stir until smooth. Pour over the cookie crumbs. Let stand until set.

Tip

When making candies that are dipped in chocolate, include a little shortening. Margarine contains some water, which will cause chocolate to "seize," or curdle, so it can't be used to dip or coat candies. TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

crispy peanut butter balls

YIELD: 6 DOZEN.

- 2 cups creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 3-3/4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 3 cups crisp rice cereal
- 4 cups (24 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup plus 1 teaspoon shortening, *divided*
- 1/3 cup vanilla *or* white chips

1. In a large mixing bowl, beat peanut butter and butter until blended; gradually beat in confectioners' sugar. Stir in cereal. Shape into 1-in. balls. Refrigerate until chilled.
2. In a large microwave-safe bowl, combine chocolate chips and 1/4 cup shortening. Microwave on high until chips are melted; stir until smooth. Dip balls into chocolate; place on a waxed paper-lined pan.
3. In a small microwave-safe bowl, combine vanilla chips and remaining shortening. Microwave at 70% power until melted; stir until smooth. Drizzle over candies. Refrigerate until set.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reduced-fat or generic brands of peanut butter are not recommended for this recipe.

butter pecan fudge

Pam Smith
Alta Loma, California

Toasted pecans add a nutty crunch to this creamy, buttery fudge. I have given this candy with its wonderful caramel flavor as gifts at Christmastime, and people always rave about it!

tasteofhome

caramel pecan candy

Dick Deacon
Lawrenceville, Georgia

Sweet and chewy, these yummy layered squares are a great sweet treat. I have also made this recipe in a 9-inch pie pan and cut it in very small pieces. They're so rich, you'll savor every bite.

tasteofhome

butter pecan fudge

YIELD: 1-1/4 POUNDS.

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 cup pecan halves, toasted and coarsely chopped

1. In a large heavy saucepan, combine butter, sugars, cream and salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Boil for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat; stir in the vanilla. Stir in the confectioners' sugar until smooth. Fold in pecans.
2. Spread into a buttered 8-in. square dish. Cool to room temperature. Cut into 1-in. squares. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Tip

When making fudge, you can simply butter or grease the pan with cooking spray to prevent the candy from sticking. But many recipes suggest first lining the pan with foil. This allows the fudge to be lifted out of the pan in one piece. Cutting the fudge outside of the pan prevents the pan from being scratched by the knife and also allows for more evenly cut pieces. To prepare a foil-lined pan, line the pan with foil extending over the sides of the pan. Grease the foil with butter or coat with cooking spray.
TASTE OF HOME TEST KITCHEN

caramel pecan candy

YIELD: ABOUT 6-1/2 DOZEN.

- 1/3 cup plus 1/2 cup butter, *divided*
- 20 cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies, crushed
- 1 package (14 ounces) caramels
- 3 cups chopped pecans, toasted

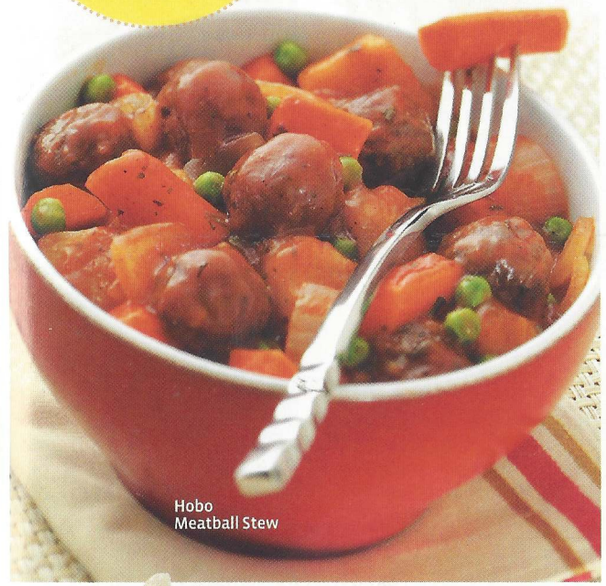
TOPPING:

- 3/4 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
- 3 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

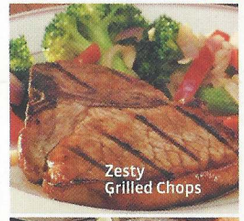
1. In a large saucepan, melt 1/3 cup butter over medium heat; stir in the cookie crumbs. Press into an ungreased 9-in. square baking dish. Bake at 325° for 10-12 minutes or until set. Cool on a wire rack. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, melt caramels and remaining butter over low heat. Stir in the pecans. Pour over crust. Cool.
2. For topping, in a small saucepan, combine the chocolate chips, butter, cream and corn syrup. Cook and stir over low heat until smooth. Remove from the heat; stir in vanilla. Pour over caramel layer. Cool on a wire rack. Refrigerate until chocolate hardens. Let candy stand at room temperature for 5-10 minutes before cutting into 1-in. squares. Store in the refrigerator.

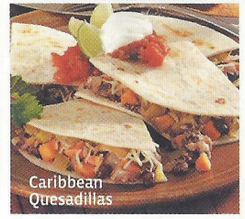
Yours Free...

50 bonus recipes!


Hobo Meatball Stew

Italian Skillet Supper


Zesty Grilled Chops


Caribbean Quesadillas

Bumblebee Banana Cupcakes

all these and more!

visit us online to get all 50!
www.TasteofHome.com/50bonus

index

almond apricot dips, 73
almond crunch, 69
aniseed biscotti, 31
be-mine sandwich cookies, 17
best-ever sugar cookies, 9
black cherry swirl fudge, 57
butter brickle biscotti, 27
butter cookie snowmen, 11
butter pecan fudge, 77
butterscotch gingerbread cookies, 33
butterscotch hard candy, 61
candy cane cookies, 45
caramel cashew clusters, 57
caramel pecan candy, 77
caramel swirls, 47
cathedral window cookies, 21
cherry christmas slices, 25
chips galore cookies, 49
chocolate coconut neapolitans, 33
chocolate-covered cherry cookies, 27
chocolate-dipped maple logs, 9
chocolate-dipped orange cookies, 35
chocolate macadamia macaroons, 3
chocolate mint dreams, 11
chocolate mint surprises, 17
chocolate mint whoopie pies, 53
chocolate peppermint bark, 63
coconut pecan cookies, 45
cookie dough truffles, 63
cranberry nut cookies, 29
cran-orange icebox cookies, 51
cream cheese bonbons, 71
crisp chocolate chip cookies, 47
crispy peanut butter balls, 75
date nut icebox cookies, 53
fancy peanut butter cookies, 43
frosted poppy seed cookies, 13
fudgy pinwheel cookies, 21
gingerbread boy cookies, 55
hint o' mint cookies, 7
holiday truffles, 69
jumbo chocolate chip cookies, 39
layered mint fudge, 67
lemon stars, 35
lime spritz cookies, 3
maine mud cookies, 51
mint cookie candies, 75
mint-mallow chocolate cups, 71
mocha cookie pretzels, 29
mocha nut fudge, 65
nuts-about-you cookie sticks, 31
nutty caramels, 73
orange gumdrops, 65
peanut butter clusters, 59
peanut butter cup cookies, 5
peanut butter snowballs, 67
pecan logs, 13
penguin cutouts, 19
peppermint meltaways, 41
peppermint taffy, 59
pineapple delights, 15
raisin cashew drops, 61
rosettes, 23
snowman sugar cookies, 37
soft molasses cutout cookies, 49
spice cutout cookies, 41
spice spritz cookies, 39
star sandwich cookies, 7
strawberry cream cookies, 19
surprise crinkles, 25
swedish butter cookies, 43
sweet potato spice cookies, 37
tea cakes with butter frosting, 23
two-tone christmas cookies, 55
vanilla walnut crescents, 15
white chocolate raspberry thumbprints, 5

taste of home
christmas cookies & candies

EDITOR IN CHIEF Catherine Cassidy
VICE PRESIDENT/SPECIAL INTEREST PUBLICATIONS Heidi Reuter Lloyd
CREATIVE DIRECTOR Ardyth Cope
FOOD DIRECTOR Diane Werner RD

SENIOR EDITOR/ SPECIAL INTEREST PUBLICATIONS Faithann Stoner
ART DIRECTOR Courtney Lentz
EDITOR Julie Blume Benedict
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR Jessie Sharon
CONTENT PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR Julie Wagner
LAYOUT DESIGNER Kathleen Bump
COPY EDITOR Susan Uphill
RECIPE ASSET SYSTEMS Coleen Martin, Sue A. Jurack
PREMEDIA SUPERVISOR Scott Berger
RECIPE TESTING & EDITING Taste of Home Test Kitchen
FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY Taste of Home Photo Studio
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Barb Czysz
SENIOR WEB EDITOR Sarah Marx Feldner
WEB COMMUNITY MANAGER Erik Bergstrom

VICE PRESIDENT, PUBLISHER Lora Gier, lora_gier@rd.com
MARKETING DIRECTOR Kym Blanchard
VICE PRESIDENT, SALES & MARKETING Mark Wildman
MANAGING DIRECTOR, SALES & MARKETING Maureen Polo
ADVERTISING TRAFFIC SPECIALIST Kristine Jacobson
NEW YORK ACCOUNT DIRECTOR Mary Gilbert, mary_gilbert@rd.com
NEW YORK ACCOUNT MANAGER Kristine Cronin, kristine_cronin@rd.com
DETROIT ACCOUNT MANAGER Jani Berger, jani_berger@rd.com
CHICAGO ACCOUNT DIRECTOR Kelly Paxson, kelly_paxson@rd.com
CHICAGO ACCOUNT MANAGER Maura O'Brien, maura_obrien@rd.com
LOS ANGELES ACCOUNT MANAGER Joel Millikin, joel_millikin@rd.com
TASTEOFHOME.COM GENERAL MANAGER Renee Jordan
TASTE OF HOME COOKING SCHOOLS DIRECTOR Sandy Bloom
CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER Lisa Karpinski
RETAIL SALES MANAGER Brian Theveny
RETAIL MARKETING MANAGER Lisa MacDonald

COVER PHOTO
PHOTOGRAPHER Dan Roberts
FOOD STYLIST Sarah Thompson
SET STYLIST Stephanie Marchese

the reader's digest association, inc.

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Mary G. Berner
PRESIDENT, U.S. AFFINITIES Suzanne M. Grimes
SVP, CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER Amy J. Radin
PRESIDENT, GLOBAL CONSUMER MARKETING Dawn M. Zier

Jif

Some Holiday Cookies
Seem To Get All The Attention.

Irresistible Jif® Peanut Butter Cookies

INGREDIENTS:
¾ cup Jif® Creamy Peanut Butter
½ cup Crisco® All-Vegetable Shortening
1 ¼ cups firmly packed light brown sugar
3 Tbsps milk
1 Tbsp vanilla extract
1 large egg
1 ¾ cups Pillsbury BEST® All Purpose Flour
¾ tsp baking soda
¾ tsp salt

DIRECTIONS:
Heat oven to 375°F—Combine peanut butter, shortening, brown sugar, milk and vanilla in a bowl—Beat at medium speed until well blended—Add egg—Beat until blended—Combine flour, baking soda and salt—Add to creamed mixture at low speed—Drop by rounded Tbsp 2 inches apart onto greased baking sheet—Flatten slightly and draw star pattern with edge of fork—Bake for 7 to 8 minutes or until set and just beginning to brown—Cool 2 minutes on baking sheet—Remove cookies to cooling rack to cool completely—Makes 3 dozen cookies

For more recipe ideas, go to jif.com

©/® The J.M. Smucker Company

Regional Baking Traditions for the holidays

Mount Rainier Macaroons

Wintermint Wafers

Almond Butter Buckeyes

Apple Cider Buttons

Gold Rush Bars

Pistachio Biscochitos

Chocolate Butter Pecans

Bananas Foster Bars

REAL BUTTER
Pure and Natural

It all begins with REAL Butter.

Every part of the country has its own holiday cookie traditions. But whether you live in San Francisco or Savannah, one thing is sure to be the same. The best-tasting cookies start with the pure and natural flavor of **REAL Butter**. It's what gives holiday cookies the richness and texture that makes them favorites year after year. And it's an all-natural ingredient you can feel good about.

For holiday cookie recipes inspired by regional traditions throughout the U.S., visit **butterisbest.com/tasteofhome**.

© 2009 WMMB, Inc. / America's Dairy Farmers®